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**Feline Conservation Federation**



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On the cover: Deputy Corky poses with his human, Sgt. Mike Kenyan. If you look closely, you'll see Corky is wearing his official deputy badge.



Corky gets a belly-rub.



## 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.

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## Letter from the President

### Running your cats

The primary purpose of this letter is to offer information on exotic feline running exercise to help the exotic felines live a healthier life. Running exercise of the felines helps to improve the management of their weight and stress. Exotic feline running exercise is an area that I feel is neglected in some of our facilities. It is costly and difficult to design a facility that includes the proper running exercise of our felines and there is no one right way to approach it.

I will discuss some of the things we have designed into our facility to exercise our small felines like the serval and bobcat such as a cheetah high speed running exercise system for possible future cheetahs research. My love of the cheetah and their special need for high speed running exercise helped me think “running exercise” for all our captive felines.

In 1993, my wife Patty and I got our first exotic cat, which was a seven week-old serval we named Kyra. We now have five servals and three bobcats. From 1993 to 1996, we had no way to allow Kyra to have high speed running exercise. We played ball in the house and walked her on a leash, but she did not get the proper running exercise like we wanted for her.

We have 36 acres of land and built a new home in 1996. A couple of years later we built the feline facility. During the design of the facility, I especially gave attention on how to provide for running exercise of our felines. The facility was designed to incorporate high speed running areas for the felines, which made the facility more difficult and costly to build. I also wanted the facility to be climate controlled and with air purification.

For climate control, we installed a 2½ ton capacity in-ground American Geo Thermal heating/cooling system. We set the cooling at 78° and the heating at 64°. For air purification, we use EcoQuest living ozone/ion generation unit and an EcoQuest ozone blaster unit. The combination of these two air purification units work very well.

The facility was designed for eight medium to small exotic felines. Each single or pair of felines has an inside heated/cooled



12' x 12' area, a 12' x 12' roof covered open sided area, and a 12' wide x 100' long enclosed grass run. I like the natural effect of grass for the runs. The runs are large enough to where the cats do not kill the grass. Mowing the runs with a push mower is time consuming and hot work in the summer, but worth it.

As long as weather permits—above

40°—every night I throw a ball the full length of the 100' long run for the cats to chase at full running speed. After approximately eight to ten trips, the cats lay down exhausted. The cats always get excited about playing ball even though they do the same thing every night. I know this high speed running exercise allows the cats to be healthier and happier and I have fun playing



**Looking like a modern-day Stonehenge, this high-speed cheetah exercise facility may unlock the secrets to cheetah longevity and fecundity. For scale, notice Bob standing in center.**



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ball with them.

In 2003 I decided to take the high speed running exercise to another level. Due to my reading articles on captive cheetahs and their medical problems in captivity, I saw the need to see why cheetahs in the wild do not appear to have these same life-shortening medical problems as the captive cheetahs do. The only thing that seemed missing between the wild and captive cheetah was the lack of high speed running of the captive cheetah. It is my opinion: cheetah is the only cat that needs high speed running for proper health.

I am concerned about the plight of the cheetah in the wild and in captivity. The cheetah numbers are rapidly declining in the wild and they have difficulty surviving long term in captivity. Unless there is a dramatic change in the care of the cheetah, the cheetah numbers will decline to the point where their numbers will be too low to allow for genetic diversity in breeding. The World Wildlife Federation estimates at the rate the decline is currently going, the cheetah could become extinct in the wild in the next 20 years. The cheetah's numbers are declining at a rate of 5% a year in both the



**Cheetah exercise system control tower**

wild and captivity. At this rate, the current worldwide captive cheetah populations will drop from estimated 1376 to estimated 100 within 20 years.

Cheetahs have enlarged hearts and lungs for high speed running. Without the outlet

of high speed running in captivity, the accumulated energies causes the cheetah to develop respiratory and other medical problems which makes it difficult for the cheetah to survive properly over six to ten years in captivity. I feel this lack of high speed running of the cheetah is the number one cause of their medical problems leading to their early death in captivity.

Presently there is not a good easy way to give the cheetah the needed high-speed (up to 70 miles per hour) exercise in captivity. Some of the cheetah researchers use the dog training grid system to exercise their cheetahs. The grid system has a predictive run pattern and does not work well for the cheetah. The researchers are looking for a better exercise system.

I have designed and presently building a rotary high-speed exercise enhance system that I feel will help solve this cheetah medical problem. The exercise enhance system will duplicate an African gazelle running from a cheetah at full speed. The capability of the unit will have fast acceleration, sharp right/left turns, and reverse turns all being random and non predictive for the cheetah. The system covers a 150' diameter area.

The system is high tech, but simple. It is a modular system, which makes it portable enough to set up any place in the world including the rehab centers of Africa. I feel this new system will not only solve the lack of cheetah high-speed running, but also the cheetah "chase-kill" death syndrome prob-

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**Center of high-speed cheetah facility is silhouetted against the sky.**

lem. The wild cheetah by nature is programmed to chase and kill its prey for fresh meat to feed on and reluctant to feed on any prey not killed by the cheetah. Wild captive cheetahs in African rehab centers are reluctant to accept food from humans which causes some cheetahs to die from starvation.

I feel that the CPRC-USA high-speed exercise enhance system will duplicate this “chase-kill” by having the cheetah chase and capture the meat hanging on the exercise enhancer, which means to the cheetah “chase-kill.” This eliminates the food from having to be handed directly to the cheetah so it will not learn to be hand fed. This human interaction of hand feeding a wild cheetah could be detrimental to the cheetah after it is released back to nature.

I’m presently in the process of building the exercise enhancer on our 36-acre USDA 501(c)3 licensed facility, known as Cheetah Preservation and Research Center. After it is demonstrated that this system will solve the lack of cheetah high-speed running and “chase-kill” problems, then the system will be ready to help cheetah all over the world. I feel this exercise enhancer will be a big medical breakthrough for the cheetah. I have 95% of the exercise enhancer complete and hope to finalize this summer.

Even though the system is designed for the maximum speed for the cheetah, it also can be used for any exotic cat. I plan to run

our servals and bobcats on the exercise system.

In order to save up the funds to finish the unit, I took last year off from working on it, plus I needed to work on some home pro-

jects that were being neglected due to working on the system. It has taken more time to build the system because I am doing most of the weld fabrication and construction myself.

I want to thank the many FCF and Midwest Exotic Feline Educational Society (MEFES) members for all their help on building the 400 feet of retaining fence around the high-speed exercise system.

I want to give special thanks to the following members: Monte Frances for all his help on installing the main and secondary drive programmable controllers and for lots of other general help, Carol and Craig Bohning for system equipment support, and to the late Jim O’Brian, who passed away on July 2, 2005 for helping me build and assemble the unit.

I encourage you that do not have the means of fast running your exotic cats for exercise to look at ways to do that for their better health and happiness. I want to hear from you on ideas for cat health enhancement. Your story may inspire others.

—Robert Turner

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# Bobcat Equals Family

By Christian Mikusevich

As I look down at the ball of fur snoozing away on the sofa, I wondered how my family and I had reached this point. Was she really on the verge of seven months old? Were her paws really that big? Is she already getting her adult teeth in? I could not believe how the days, weeks, and months flew by so quickly.

I remember the endless nights of research and long hours of conversation trying to explain to my parents that by having this wonderful animal, there will be nothing but great experiences for all of us. Believe me, it took a lot of talking! But finally they agreed. Being only nineteen at the time, and still living at home, I think they realized that this was going to be a *family* commitment, and it took that a while to sink into their heads. After receiving the approval of my parents, I once again dove into the computer to find the perfect breeders that would supply me with my future baby and I found them. Their names were Bart and Lynn Culver. So, I whipped up a brief e-mail and then desperately tried to get my finger under control to click and send the message! Lynn responded immediately stating she was expecting a litter of kittens and would keep me informed. She also suggested I get all of my permits and such ready and so I did.

Weeks went by and finally I received a response saying the litter had arrived and to send in the deposit. I remember calling for the first time and my nerves were so wired that I couldn't even speak correctly. I was so excited that I was actually planning the future arrival of my bobcat kitten. The phone conversation went wonderfully, after I controlled my nerves the best that I could. We chatted about anything and everything that had to do with exotic cats, and more importantly the care and handling of bobcats. Towards the middle of the conversation, she began asking me where the kitten would be staying while it was an infant and so on, and I stated that it would be in the house and my parents had already gave me full permission.

I instantly realized that I had really never mentioned my parents or the fact that I still

lived at home. Before I could continue, she instantly questioned how old I was. I stated nineteen and my heart dropped. Thoughts began racing through my head: would she not allow me to purchase one of her kittens because I am younger? Would she think I am not responsible enough? The silence on the phone as she collected her thoughts was the longest silence I have ever experienced.

Finally she stated in the most calm and mannerly way, "Well, Christian, my rule of thumb here is really not to sell anything to



anyone that is under thirty." At that moment, I felt like a little kid being told I couldn't have the toy Tonka truck he so desperately wanted. I almost wanted to cry! But then she continued by saying, "But after talking for a little while on the phone, I feel secure that you are a mature, responsible adult that is well capable of carrying out this magnificent task. But there is one thing I would like to do." My voice managed to

crack out, "What?" She said, "I would like to talk to one of your parents so I can explain to them how much they are going to be involved in this as much as you are."

The beat of my heart was beginning to return to normal at this point, and I walked over to my dad sitting at the table and told him that Lynn would like to speak with him. He accepted the phone and walked off into a secluded room and shut the door. I remember pacing outside the hallway as they discussed things, sometimes my heart rising with the positive responses and then dropping with the negative ones.

Finally after an eternity, my dad walked out of the room and handed me the phone smiling. I answered, "Hello?" The first words out of her mouth were, "Christian, you have a wonderful family, and I am so glad that they are willing to support you in not only this, but for everything else you are challenging in life." I then just realized I wasn't breathing and decided it would probably be a good idea if I exhaled. I said to myself, thank God that went well!

I remember her saying that she was very impressed on how my father has passed on that love for animals in myself and has continuously nurtured that. I agreed with her and told her yes, my dad was always the one to take me and my siblings out and buy some baby chicks or ducklings, or raise some little rabbit kits. He would be the one to bring home a litter of raccoons he found abandoned or a chipmunk that was caught by the neighborhood kitty and asked

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me if I would like to raise them up. I stated to her that to this day I have been truly blessed with a wonderful family. So, we then moved on to other things and after a long conversation, she again said that she would keep me posted.

More days went by. Then it came. I remember the night I sat on the computer desperately searching my e-mails for the response from Lynn Culver that my beautiful bobcat kitten was ready for her new home. When I found it, my heart skipped a beat. I was so excited that when I jumped up to get the phone, my sleeve caught on the armchair and I rolled over backwards, with the chair! But yes, that day was a long (yet in my head, short) time ago. I had driven the seventeen-hour drive to Mena, Arkansas from little Niles, Ohio and decided to drag my brother along with me.

I will never forget the day that I walked into the room and saw her tiny, tiny head just resting on the lip of the makeshift bed that Lynn had put together for the litter. When I knelt down, her eyes popped open and the first thing she wanted was food. I laughed at her kitten-like anxiousness as she pressed her head back and forth to



**Dad, mom, sister, and Kisa**

reach momma with the bottle. Her powerful lungs let out a scream that would make any person jump to its command as she waited for Lynn to mix up the formula.

I was in so much awe that I barely felt the tap on my shoulder and when I looked around, Lynn handed the bottle to me and

said, “Go ahead, and give it a try.” I actually remember my hands slightly shaking as I reached for the squirming baby and followed Lynn’s explicit directions on bottle-feeding kittens. I tried my best and found that it wasn’t so bad, and after the feeding was done, I gently placed the kitten on her

## FCF’S RENEWAL REWARDS PROGRAM

We are excited to tell you about a new rewards program we are starting for early renewals. For each member who renews during the first month they receive their renewal form, their name will be entered in a drawing for a prize! One baseball cap with the FCF ocelot logo emblem on the front will be given away each month to the lucky FCF member who is drawn.

Irene Satterfield, our web site master, has been hard at work to make the renewal process even easier. She has implemented a system that allows us to send renewal notices electronically. Our first test run of this system was in January of this year. You can either print out the form and mail it in the treasurer or simply fill out the form right on your computer. You even have the option of paying for your FCF renewal with Paypal.

Now you will be able to simply log onto the FCF web-site, fill out your form there, hit submit and your information will be automatically updated in the system. Having your information current in our system helps tremendously with keeping costs down. First class mail and the printing of multiple renewals forms adds up.

And we pay significantly for each returned or forwarded magazine. You wouldn’t want to miss any issues of the magazine. You can think of that as a second reward.

In summary, you can log onto the FCF members-only section and view your personal membership profile to update your mailing address, e-mail address, or phone number anytime. And you can renew with Paypal. Or you can just send any address or information changes and your check to the membership services director in a timely manner and she will keep your record current for you. Either way you might be soon wearing a nifty FCF hat.

Early (especially electronic) renewal saves FCF manpower and valuable dollars in postage. Let’s work together to help put our efforts and dues towards more important issues. We are still developing these systems, so if you have any suggestions or ideas along the way, please let us know. Also, we ask that you please be patient as we work through any bugs!

little bed to join the rest of her now fed litter mates.

After spending a whole wonderful day at Lynn's beautiful facility, it was finally time to go all the way back home. I dreaded the drive, but I knew that there were plenty of people anxiously awaiting the arrival of the little one, including my parents and twelve year old sister. The drive was terrible, but we made it home at one-thirty in the morning on Monday. My heart pounded as I yanked my brother's arm to wake him and have him help unload the car, and then get to bed for school in the morning! I was so nervous for my parents' reaction. When I stepped in the house, I had four eyeballs darting from me to the crate that the little one snoozed away in. My mom and dad were all smiles, but I could see the nervousness in their eyes. When the kitten finally crawled out of the crate, both of my parents were ecstatic! After tons of hellos and how cutes, I finally managed to pull her away and take her up to my bed. As soon as we

hit the pillow we were both out. I believe I fell asleep with a smile on my face.

Weeks and months have flown by, and now Kisa, at seven months old, lies in the corner of the couch sleeping away for the first time in forever. My whole family has grown so attached to her and the moment they walk in the door, the first question is, "Where is Kisa?" Her antics continuously make us laugh and she is a source of great entertainment for everyone who walks in our door. I will never forget the times I have caught her in the refrigerator, or sneaking



**Kisa gets some lap time with dad**

around on the forbidden counter top, or leaping off the banister onto my mother's head! (Thank God she hasn't tried to jump off of the balcony yet!) I will never forget the day she unfolded all of my laundry and spread it out on the floor, and then looked at me with bright angelic eyes pretty much asking what she did wrong. Even the family nights where we all sat around and just watched Kisa leaping around like a maniac was wonderful and will never be forgotten. We have had our good and bad days, and the bites and scratches have come and gone, but I wouldn't trade those experiences for anything.

Kisa has become apart of not only my immediate family, but also my extended family. She visits my grandparents weekly and has learned to sit on the chair while my grandfather talks to her. She looks forward to the days when my Aunt Suzy baby-sits for me when I am away at school so she can wrestle with the dog and many cats that abide there. She cries to be released from her crate to go and tease the dogs at my other cousin's house. Her visits to the pet store are her favorite, and the moment we walk in the door, she drags me to the kitty towers. She also loves her walks in the park and you can almost see the smile across her face as she wades through the stream or climbs up the trees and runs back down. My mom hysterically laughs when she folds the clothes and Kisa leaps after the jeans or shirts that are flying in the air. She

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out smarted my mom along time ago! So, what would life be without Kisa? I could easily say *boring* and *dull*! Her energy is enough to get us all going when we are lazy and her comedic acts are enough to bring us up when we are down. My family and I cherish every moment we have with this beautiful kitten.

But of course, with every pro there is a con. We all realize that as she grows older she will begin to change. As bobcats mature, they become very secluded and in the future, we realize that most of these breath-taking cats eventually become kitties that stay at home and only enjoy the company of their immediate family members. So, I have painfully realized that these wondrous opportunities that I have to share Kisa with others (under very careful supervision, of course) right now may someday end. And of course that is fine with me, because my love and commitment to her will never end. My whole family has been a great help and has learned what to do and not to do when things go good or bad.



**Christian and Kisa**

This whole experience has been truly wonderful so far, and I know there are many new ones to come. So, future prospectors, having an exotic cat is truly a wonderful, terrifying, thrilling, unique experience all wrapped up together. Is it a stroll in the park? Absolutely *not*! Yes, it is

a beautiful experience, but one thing for sure is that owning an exotic cat is a lot of work and responsibility and is definitely a full time, family commitment. I will be the first to shout that out loud. But, I would expect it no other way. And neither would Kisa. •



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# 2006 Phoenix Exotics Conference

February 24-25, 2006, Las Vegas, NV

By Tim Stoffel

It's hard to imagine that five years have already gone by since Phoenix Exotic Wildlife Association had its first annual conference in Pahrump, Nevada. A lot has changed in those five years Phoenix has been around. They have matured as an organization. And the fight to responsibly keep our exotic animals has intensified. The 2006 meeting promised to be interesting as it is the peak of the 'legislative season' and a lot was going on at the time.

One thing that seems to have become a tradition each year was having a good number of the folks from the State of Washington descend on my home here in Reno on their way down to Las Vegas. One of these is always Jeanne Hall, president of Phoenix Exotics. This year their trip went unusually well and they were here early enough for us to have a good dinner together. We spent some time looking at celestial objects with my new telescope, then off to bed for the long drive the next day!

I have been trying for some years to get the Washington folks over to our animals at our zoo (which is next door and where I help take care of the big cats.) Weather, mud, or tight schedules have always prevented this. Finally this time, we were able to visit. Our male lion Kenya took an instant liking to Jeanne, unlike any other I have ever seen. The cougars liked Jeanne a lot as well, as she has cougars herself. We had a nice chat with the zoo's management, and then were on our way to 'Vegas!

We only got as far as Fallon when we received word that Jeanne's place had ended up being shown as part of a massive new exposé by the animal rights group, API. This was bad in that someone had obtained these images without Jeanne's permission. It was good in that it showed that Phoenix was definitely having an effect in the fight against animal rights!

With beautiful weather, the rest of the drive to 'Vegas was nearly eventless (except I discovered my parking brake had been dragging for 70 miles!) We ate dinner and went to bed early, knowing the next two days would be intense. The conference was at the La Quinta Inn, a really nice non-gaming hotel just a short distance off the



Las Vegas Strip.

Friday morning started early. Due to a scheduling fiasco, we found out that our meeting room would really be at the hotel

next door, the Candlewood Suites. We got all the convention stuff over there and got it set up. This year I had been able to pre-build the attendee folders which saved a

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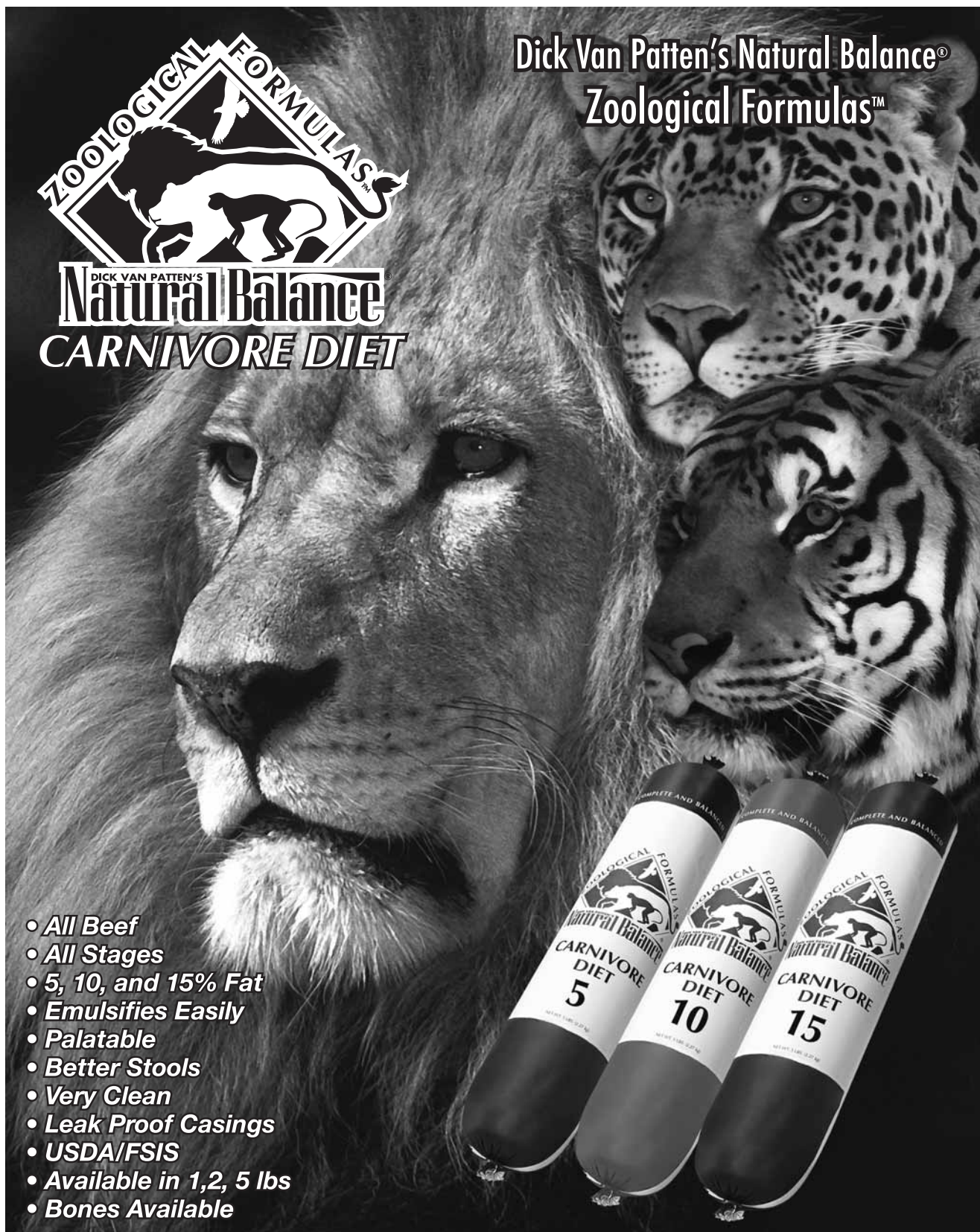
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substantial amount of time.

The meeting opened with an announcement concerning the API exposé. People were shocked that this had occurred, but were not really surprised. When have the animal rights people played by the rules in the past?

The first speaker was Dr. Gary Pusillo, president of Complete Natural Nutrition (formerly Aperon). His talk, as usual, was highly entertaining with lots of interesting visual aids. The talk centered on the need for foods and supplements that were more available to the animals' systems. He also had some of his products there for us to



**Dr. Gary Pusillo explains how supplements are an important part of complete nutrition.**

look at during the breaks.

I was the second speaker of the day. My talk was entitled "Filing comments of the rulemaking for the Captive Wildlife Safety Act." Considering that this presentation was entirely extemporaneous (I had just finished writing 30 pages of comments on this rulemaking a few hours before Jeanne and crew had arrived at my home), it went very well and I got lots of compliments. One of these was from Edward Dominquez, the person from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, who would speak on this rulemaking the next day.

The third speaker was Vernon Weir, director of the American Sanctuary Association. Mr. Weir has spoken to us now four

times, and we have all learned something from what he has to say. Although not a big supporter of private ownership, he has always presented (what I believe to be) an honest assessment of what is really going on in the sanctuary world. This year, he reports that placements of big cats were down considerably from previous years. The drop was mostly USDA-licensed facilities. Placements from private owners, which has been fairly low in previous years, has not significantly changed, either up or down. He did add that nearly all sanctuaries were full.

After lunch, Barry Lagan, Ron Hanson, and Charles McGee of the National Rifle Association showed us video of a debate that had been recently held in England. This debate was between Wayne LaPierre, Chief Executive of the NRA and Andrew Butler, a spokesman for PETA. This interesting—and often heated—debate shows us that PETA not only has a very anti-animal agenda, but that they are not above disrupting the debate itself, if it serves their ends. This is a must-see for any exotic animal owner. Phoenix is working on getting a supply of DVDs of the debate. (I was a debate judge in another life, and Mr. LaPierre won hands-down not only on defending his position, but in every technical area of debating as well.)

Ruth Hage, a student from England, announced her intention to do a scientific study of the human-animal bond. She wants to explore how this relationship differs for people the animal knows and people the animal does not know. She also emphasized the importance of scientific research on strengthening our stance on keeping exotic animals.

The final program for Friday was perhaps the most unusual presentation ever given at a Phoenix meeting. Entitled "The Lion and the Goddess: Big Cats and the Divine Feminine in Ancient Iconography," it was a survey of the lion (especially) as a god (or goddess) in Egypt and other ancient Middle Eastern societies. It was a fascinating paper and the closest thing to a real scientific paper ever presented at the conference. The presenter was Dr. Anne Key, Priestess of the Temple of Goddess Spirituality devoted to Sekhmet, the lioness-headed Egyptian goddess. This temple is in nearby Indian Springs.

After the presentations, many people

stayed for the Phoenix annual business meeting. The meeting went on for about an hour.

A bit later that evening, I joined Scott and Raven Simons on a 'cat tour' of Las Vegas. Our first stop was—what else—the MGM Grand lion habitat. We picked a good night to visit the habitat. They had two young adult lionesses in the habitat which were just having a grand time playing with the keepers. But eventually, they got tired, and sacked out on the glass on top of the observation tunnel in the habitat. We then did some shopping in the Lion Habitat gift shop.

Next, we went to New York, New York, across the street from the MGM Grand, to eat at Gallagher's Steak House. Gallagher's is a meat eater's paradise. Outside the restaurant in a glass case is a large number of whole prime ribs being dry aged. As it turns out, we weren't the only ones 'turning carnivore' that evening, so there was a two-hour wait to be seated.

We made good use of this time by walking to the Luxor, the pyramid-shaped hotel with the light shooting out of the top. There, we spent the next hour trying to locate just the right Sekhmet figure for Raven. Unfortunately, Sekhmet was not 'in' at this time, and we were only able to find a couple of small figures.

We had an absolutely wonderful dinner at Gallagher's. Between the three of us, we consumed nearly three pounds of beef. We kept the very scant leftovers for the feral cats living around the hotel, for which they were very appreciative! On the way back to the MGM Grand, we spent a good amount of time admiring the 50-ton bronze lion in front of the hotel.

Saturday morning, we were all back to the meeting room for day two of the conference.

The first paper was by Brent Andrus, who represents a plethora of aviculture groups. His presentation centered on parrot conservation. Among interesting facts given in his presentation: The pet trade is not a real problem with a given species of wild parrots until their numbers are very low. But, when a population of a given species gets low enough, private breeders get interested in conserving the bird. As a result, some species of parrots that are now extinct (or nearly so) in the wild are common in captivity. Private parrot owners

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have also helped the USDA develop captive release programs for these birds. This is Brent's second presentation for Phoenix, and both of them have been excellent and informative.



**Jeanne Hall opens the weekend.**

The next paper was by Dr. Laurie Gage, DVM. She is a large felid and aquatic mammal specialist for USDA APHIS. Her presentation was on the rescue of several dolphins and sea lions that had escaped from an aquarium destroyed by hurricane Katrina. This was very interesting presentation. The dolphins' trainers used the dolphins' training to help them get into rescue structures. Despite the complete destruction of their home, all of the dolphins were successfully recovered and moved to a new home. The US Navy helped this effort with a lot of equipment that they have developed for their dolphin-training program. This is Dr. Gage's second presentation for us and she always has an interesting presentation.

Next up was Brian Werner of Tiger Creek Wildlife Refuge. Mr. Werner is interested in the genetic preservation of the tiger and other big cat species. His talk discussed how Tiger Creek got started and how it is run. He focused on some construction projects that are currently underway or just completed. He talked about the importance of proper funding and doing everything 'by the book.' He concluded by discussing his latest plans for a series of resorts associated with big cat sanctuaries. The resorts would help fund the sanctuary associated with it and the sanctuary would in turn educate the resort's guests about tigers and other big

cats.

After lunch, the next speaker was Edward Dominquez, a special agent with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. His talk was mainly on the rulemaking for the Captive Wildlife Safety Act, which was to close to public comment a few days after the conference was over. He answered a lot of controversial questions. He also talked very briefly on the Endangered Species Act.

Unfortunately, the remaining two speakers for the day, Dennis Hill of the Willowhill Center for Rare and Endangered Tigers and Linda Hunnicut of Simply Simian, were unable to make the meeting. As a bonus we had Fred Henson, game warden, Nevada Department of Wildlife. He told some stories and answered some questions on Nevada's wildlife laws.

The meeting closed with an interesting roundtable discussion where some ideas were thrown in the air and openly discussed. One idea that was extensively discussed was the future of Phoenix's peer review accreditation program. Another idea extensively discussed was using radio and TV media as a way of spreading the word about exotic animal ownership.

After the roundtable, we all helped clean up the meeting room and pack all the meeting stuff until next year. We all then jumped

in vehicles and headed for a Chinese buffet a few blocks from the hotel. We all enjoyed a really good feed and got to know each other a bit better.

Again that evening, I joined Scott and Raven Simons on a further exploration of the Las Vegas Strip. We went to the Mirage Hotel to see their tiger in the lobby. Unfortunately, they no longer put a tiger in the lobby in the evening. We did spend lots of time looking at a big aquarium in the hotel's lobby, as well as taking in the volcanic eruption that periodically occurs outside the Mirage. From there, we walked down to the Bellagio to see the dancing waterfall and we looked at some of the art exhibits inside the hotel. Of special interest was the Chihuly glass ceiling and a Chihuly store with prices so high nothing was marked!

On Sunday morning, it was time to say good bye until next year. Eventually, we all got underway to wherever it was we were going.

As usual, the Phoenix Exotics conference did not disappoint. We had the best meeting ever this year, despite not having any 'entertainment.' (The Fercos brothers did attend part of the conference, though.) We now know having the meeting in Las Vegas proper is the way to go. We have made some running changes in the way the conference will be done in the future. And next year should easily top this year! •



**Laurie Gage, DVM, shares war stories of rescuing dolphins which were washed out of their aquarium after hurricane Katrina.**



# Corky the Cougar

## A law enforcement legend retires

I acquired Corky in the fall of 1989. He was seized by FWFG on an illegal sale to a pet store in Sarasota County. He was two months old, and weighed about 12 lbs. Corky was malnourished and underweight for his age. He was given to me to “baby sit” until the court case on the illegal sale was resolved. At the time, I had another cougar and I was permitted to keep them. After about four months, the court case was resolved and I adopted Corky.

After word spread to my neighbors that I now had a cougar kitten, one of my neighbors asked if I would bring the kitten to her class at Able Elementary School. After clearing the idea with the students’ teacher, Mrs. Steube, I took Corky to the school. The presentation was well received and I came up with the idea of using Corky for educational talks to inform the kids about cougars, wildlife conservation, and as a liaison between cops and kids.

The presentations with Corky were very popular and were provided free of charge. Similar presentations by others in the Tampa Bay area were charging the schools several hundred dollars. Corky’s presentations were always provided free of charge because I felt that the money could be better spent. When contributions were offered, individuals were asked instead to make a donation in Corky’s name to the “Victims’ First scholarship Fund.” To date, Corky has raised almost \$5,000 in donations.

From 1989 through 1993 Corky had completed over 280 events. This averaged out to about 70 appearances per year. Corky’s popularity drew very positive attention for the MCSO and Sheriff Wells officially adopted and “deputized” Corky as the “Official Mascot of the MCSO” effective March 31, 1993. Over the next thirteen years, “Deputy Corky” would complete approximately 850 events

Although 99% of Deputy Corky’s work with the community was educational, he did do his part to take a bite out of crime. On one occasion, he responded to a parking lot disturbance call, when the persons involved saw Deputy Corky arrive, they quickly decided they no longer had an issue with each other and immediately left the



area.

On another occasion, a known drug dealer approached Deputy Corky and I and asked what the “big cat” was used for. I replied, “You guys keep outrunning the dogs.” The dooper stated that if the cat bit him he would sue. I then replied that the other difference between the cat and the dog was that not only did the cat bite, but that he also eats what he bites and this dramatically reduces court time. The dooper stated he wanted no part of this and left the area. He has not been seen since.

Deputy Corky has several accomplishments during his career. County commissioner Lari Ann Harris as well as the Board of County Commissioners for Manatee County declared July 19, 1998 as “Deputy Corky and Sgt. Mike Kenyan Day” to thank us for the service we had done for the community. Additionally, Deputy Corky has maintained a perfect personnel record and has never had an administrative complaint filed against him. He has served his county, his sheriff, and his partner with the utmost of courtesy and pride.

Like all careers they eventually must come to an end. Over the past year, Deputy Corky’s health has declined. He has been diagnosed with arthritis in his shoulders and his hips. He can no longer perform his duties. Therefore, Deputy Corky respectfully requests that he be released from his duties, as the “Mascot of the Manatee County Sheriff’s Office” and conclude his thirteen year career effective March 28, 2006.

*Respectfully submitted by Sgt. M.V. Kenyan, for Dep. Corky.*

*Update: Just before we went to press, we received word that Corky did not make it to his retirement date. Due to rapidly declining health, he was euthanized on March 21 at 11:30am. Corky was 18 years old. Sgt. Kenyan tells the Manatee News, “He was a great kitty, partner, and friend. I will miss him dearly.”*

## Corky’s Accomplishments

Deputy Corky visited:

1. All schools in Manatee and Sarasota Counties, Elementary, Middle, High Schools, MCC, and New College.
2. Senior retirement centers.
3. Boys and girls clubs.
4. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.
5. Republican National Convention in Orlando.
6. Governor Bush signing three billion dollar ecological bill in and for Florida Everglades.
7. Tallahassee senate committee for preservation of land in Florida for wildlife.
8. Child safety Days.
9. Annual Manatee County Heritage parade.

Deputy Corky also became the mascot for:

1. Oneco Elementary School
2. Mills Elementary School
3. Manatee Area Transit system aka: “The CAT” transit system.
4. The “Courageous Cat” off-shore race boat and team manufactured by Cougar Marine.
5. SWAT team for the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office.
6. The Florida State Fair FWFG Commission exhibit



## Trading in Exotic Species?

The buying, selling, and trading of protected animals is highly regulated, and is taken seriously by the federal government. Federal laws such as the Endangered Species Act and the Lacey Act regulate who can trade in these animals across state lines—by and large, only few people can. Read up on the Lacey Act, the Endangered Species Act, and other related topics here:

<http://www.laceyactawareness.com>

Above all, if you have questions contact the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Your future may depend on it! Don't be found

# GUILTY!



# ***Blast from the Past. . . .Training Your Ocelot***

## **Long Island Ocelot Club**

### **May 1960—Volume 4, Issue 3**

#### MENTAL CONDITIONING (Part I)

*J. E. Coan, Clinton, NJ*

I feel that there are so many mistaken ideas about ocelots that an owner or trainer must mentally condition himself for the task ahead.

Though an ocelot certainly belongs to the cat family, it is not “just a cat” and cannot be treated as a house cat. Ocelots are high strung, full of fear, and very impressionable. One false move, no matter how innocent the move, may build a fear in your pet, which will never be removed or overcome. It is imperative to get it deeply impressed in your mind that the little bundle of fur you have brought into your home is a frightened bundle of nerves and that even when all seems well, every care must be thoroughly exercised not to cause the animal any alarm or fear. If you will remember this you may completely forget that he is a wild animal, and disregard all opinions about the impossibility of domestication of wild animals. They may apply to

other animals, but not to the ocelot. He can be completely domesticated and trained to be a friendly, docile, loveable house pet. Get it fixed in your mind with no reservation that he can become a wonderful pet if you train him properly.

Like other animals, the ocelot will never be friendly towards everyone. He will be friendly to those he accepts. The ocelot is a private pet, not a public pet and should not be subjected to the general public. He will learn to accept friends in your home when he is allowed to make the advances in friendliness, but he cannot, and will not, be forced.

Bearing these two thoughts in mind always:

- 1) do not cause him alarm or fear
- 2) he can be domesticated as a house pet if you work with your pet.

The first idea of being careful not to cause alarm or fear requires, then, gentle loving attention 24 hours a day. Always be gentle. Always make sure your ocelot sees

the movements you make. Approach him slowly, face to face, never from behind. Let him get accustomed to your hands and feet. Move slowly but not as though in fear. You do not want him to think you are afraid of him. Let him understand that with you he need not be afraid. Protect him from noises that seem to frighten him. Go to him, shield him in your arms and talk gently to him when you see he is startled or afraid. He will soon run to you every time he sees or hears something strange or is frightened. He will learn to trust and respect you, and you must never do anything while he is young to break that trust or respect.

These ideas are very general, but lack of space makes brevity necessary, and so does the difference in the personality of individual ocelots. It is impossible to be specific.

If you have questions on these two mental attitudes, please write me giving details and I will do my best to be specific on your particular situation. •

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## **The Reasons**

### **A second blast from the May 1960 issue**

*Ed and Gwen Butler, Old Saybrook, CN*

Under the heading of what ocelots can do to *amaze, intrigue, exasperate, or beguile* you, we have the following of record on one Abou, denizen of the Butler domain.

He awakes at 5:00 AM, fails to find a responsive burgher to enjoy life with him. He promptly pulls over one, and sometimes two end table lamps in the living room. This is certain to get the desired result: *attention*. My wife failed to locate the bottoms of her pajamas the other morn. I found them—in the toilet bowl. Window shades are fascinating things. You just yank the cord, and they zoom up with a clatter that easily alarms the whole household. A chicken wing gaily tossed aloft innumerable times (when one ocelot is in the waterless bathtub) will bring resulting thumps that shape our destiny and shake the house.

To give visiting ladies a thrill Abou

sneaks up the back of the davenport and wrestles with their coiffures. Be it ponytail or tiara, this is one rat's nest that gets a renovation. I lost him the other breakfast time. I found him two minutes later in the refrigerator, somewhat cool to my blandishments. Liver paste hors d'oeuvres are his specialty. Recently a petition-canvasser came to the house, glimpsed Der Katt and left without asking my John Hancock. Later a stranger at 10:00 p.m. wanted directions to a “lost” street. He felt he could find the place without further help after asking: “Ye Gods! What's *that*?” Who says ocelots are only good for chasing dogs out of the yard?

About his acute sense of smell: he yanks only my books out of the bookcase—the ones I've been reading—chews only the socks, shoes, or sweaters I've taken off; sleeps in the middle of *my* bed; rips the crossword puzzle on *my* clipboard; fights the leash with demoniacal fury; yanks the

kitchen curtains off the rods to follow *my* departure for work each morning; greets me with a rush and a chilling growl when I come home at night; prowls the front room incessantly when we have company; snaps jealously at my wife's hand when she pats my arm; “gooses” her rudely under her skirt if I slip a husbandly arm around her waist; assists not so deftly with washing, ironing, dishwashing, and shaving. He even swiped the mirror and shaving soap the other morning and went to work like a prankster on a Halloween window.

He is as resourceful as a Boy Scout, resolute as a tiger, loving as a valentine, devoted as a cocker spaniel, devious as a carnival gyp-artist, volatile as a will-o-the-wisp, forgiving as a doting mother, hammy as a first-night thespian. He's faithful as a dog and as dogged as a gumshoe detective.

*No wonder we love him!* •



# Comparing Serval to Caracal

*Matt Helton*

I received the serval in June of 2004. He was bottle fed by all family members. He also accompanied my girlfriend to work almost daily for about five months. He was petted and played with by numerous co-workers in an office setting. He is interested in new people and will walk up and smell strangers even though he does not want them to touch him.

The caracal kitten came almost exactly a year later. My serval and my domestic had already become fast friends. The new arrival was not very welcome, especially by the one year old serval. The serval did not want anything to do with kitten or those who were handling kitten. After two weeks of coaxing, he lightened up and began playing very gently with the now ten week old caracal. Today, ten months later, they are best friends and spend endless hours playing tag, chase, or other cat games. While chasing each other, the serval glides, leaps, and moves through the house almost silently, while the caracal runs through things, knocking over stools and chairs or whatever is in his way. Neither cat has ever been aggressive or violent with the other. When one is caught by the other, the game reverses itself, and the hunter now becomes the hunted.

While the serval is long and thin like a greyhound or whippet, the caracal is built for power and is more like a bull mastiff. The serval moves with such grace, speed and agility, almost soundless. The caracal on the other hand, rumbles through the house like a freight train. He seldom walks, he just bursts into an all out run to go anywhere in the house. When jumping to a higher surface, the caracal makes all kinds of noise and commotion, where the serval just seems to levitate to surface as if by magic. I wonder if this will change as the caracal ages, but my serval has never been a clumsy cat.

The serval, now 22 months old, has developed quite a sweet personality and seldom hisses at regular family members. He will allow himself to be petted for about fifteen seconds before moving off. He also



likes his ears scratched and his cheeks rubbed. If calling his name in a light tone, he will arch his back and rub up against the nearest object repeatedly. He will also get on kitchen counter, but knows not to get on

dinner table. He knows exactly what “no” means and stops whatever negative behavior immediately.

The caracal is ten months old and has the personality of a smug teenager. Although



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he likes me, he is standoffish and hissy with others. He likes being brushed (with a vacuum attachment) and likes his head scratched. Same thing here though—he will only permit scratching for ten or fifteen seconds before walking off. While calling his name he will arch his back and prance like a show horse while looking at you. He is not allowed on counter tops or the kitchen table, but will get up on them if he thinks no one is watching. If told “NO”, he will measure the situation and try and decide if he can evade the threatening party. He will also go out of his way to steal items from the counter and run off with them. Both cats are fascinated with gravity and constantly knock things over to watch them fall. After settling down for the evening, my serval will lie in the hallway keeping an eye on the front room and all that is going on there. The caracal will sit on his chair in front room and actually watch TV. His favorite shows include ice skating and sports that move fast.



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My serval plays very good naturedly with my domestic cat letting the seemingly tiny animal chase him through the house. My domestic cat usually initiates the play times. I also have a blue and gold macaw that is in a large wrought iron cage in my front room. My serval does not even seem to notice him. When younger, the serval would harass the bird pretty regularly, but after being bitten a few times, has decided the parrot is neither fun nor friendly.

My caracal is very rough with my house cat and my house cat does not play with him at all. When I am home, the house cat will shadow me and sit next to me because he knows the caracal will not mess with him if I am near. The strange part of this is that in most situations my domestic shows no fear and goes in the "big cats room" regularly. I believe the caracal does not rough up the domestic cat when I am at work, just when I'm home. All three cats have run of the house during the day while I am at work, as well as in the evening when I'm home. My caracal hunts my macaw in the evening, rushing his cage and engaging him through the bars, even though the bird nips him occasionally. The macaw actually enjoys the interaction and gets off his perch and onto the floor of his cage to play.

My serval is fascinated with what is going on outside but my caracal does not even seem to realize what windows are. My serval is extremely treat driven while my caracal does not seem to care one way or the other. When called, the serval will run into the kitchen, sit (as trained to do) and gently take a treat from a hand without nipping. The caracal will watch this from a distance, but is totally unimpressed.

Neither cat has ever attempted to escape the house and seem very unconcerned with outside. They would much rather get into my room or my son's room and destroy sheets, comforters, and clothing left out. Both cats chase and retrieve tennis balls, but the caracal, if left unattended, will destroy a tennis ball in 15 minutes. Both cats share a room at night where they sleep. This is the only time they are restricted from the main house. This is so my domestic can eat. Both exotics will eat their food in a matter of seconds if given the chance. My serval eats his food the second I put it in the dish, but my caracal will not eat while I am watching. I am not sure why.

Both exotics are best of friends and play



tag for hours every day. They show great affection for each other and can usually be found lying together on the bed with their legs intertwined. Both are spoiled rotten and react positively to me when let out of their room in the morning and in the evening when I get home. Both are happy

and healthy and have a real appreciation for human interaction. I was concerned that they would bond together so well that they would eventually ignore their human friends but that has not happened. I couldn't be happier to come home in the evening to such a fun environment. •

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# Saving the world's small wild cats: problems and opportunities

*Jim Sanderson, Ph.D.*  
*TEAM Research Scientist*  
*Center for Applied Biodiversity Science*  
*Conservation International*  
*Small Cat Conservation Alliance*

About a decade ago the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) became the World Conservation Union but remains best known as the IUCN. The Cat Specialist Group, one of many IUCN specialist groups, is a group of volunteer scientists and leading authorities on the status of wild cat populations. One responsibility of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group is to maintain and regularly update the conservation status of all wild cat species. The conservation status of all 37 of the world's cat species is summarized in the IUCN's Red List. The Red List should not be confused with CITES Appendices I - III.

Presently there is only one cat, the Iberian lynx, that is Critically Endangered. Four are Endangered (bay cat, Andean mountain cat, snow leopard, tiger) and twelve are Vulnerable (Chinese mountain cat, clouded leopard, marbled cat, rusty-spotted cat, Asiatic golden cat, flat-headed cat, African golden cat, black-footed cat, cheetah, guigna, lion, and fishing cat). Other cats are listed as Near Threatened (for instance, pallas cat and sand cat), Conservation dependent (serval), and Lower risk (ocelot).

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) is an agreement, a convention, signed by 137 nations. The convention deals with international trade in threatened species. For instance, international trade in species listed in Appendix I is prohibited because authorities believe that such trade would threaten the species' continued existence. Trade in Appendix II species is not prohibited. Often we hear the statement "All cats are listed in CITES." This is certainly true, but has little meaning or substance. For example, according to cat authorities the bay cat is listed as Endangered in the Red List but is, rather surprisingly, listed in Appendix II of CITES meaning that international trade in the species would not threaten wild populations. Moreover, CITES is a convention,

not a law, and so lacks real enforcement, at least outside North America and Europe.

Cat specialists are responsible for knowing the conservation status of all the world's wild cats. The world's big cats, members of the elite group of animals known as charismatic megafauna, receive a great deal of attention and hence conservation dollars. Updating the conservation status of the world's small cats is a far more difficult task for several reasons. After all, Exxon is not putting a guigna in your tank. Tony the tigrina isn't making cereal commercials. In fact, more money is invested in tiger conservation than in all other cat species combined. Moreover, the smaller cats are very difficult to find in the wild. While lions cannot easily hide, the flat-headed cat remains extremely elusive even to camera traps.

Generally, the less specialists hear about certain species of wild cats, the more concern we have for their populations in the wild. But how can we be sure? Concerted efforts must be made to learn more about certain species in the wild. For instance, I am now seriously involved in trying to gain

a better understanding of the conservation status of bay cat, Chinese mountain cat, flat-headed cat, and marbled cat. Suffice it to say, I am seriously concerned that these species are threatened with extinction. Each has its own unique set of threats that are taking a heavy toll on their populations. Years of concentrated effort are required and this is primarily because few specialists and students are willing or able to undertake such efforts full time with little or no financial support. But is the problem a lack of financial resources? I believe the answer is no.

I believe a lack of financial support is not the main problem thwarting small cat conservation. There is now more funding going into small cat conservation than ever before. One notable project supported by a private foundation and the Smithsonian Institution on Barro Colorado Island in the Panama Canal Zone is revealing the day-to-day activities of ocelots. You may have seen a recent National Geographic article on ocelots. The American Zoological Association (AZA) supports captive breeding



**Flat headed cat**

programs and in situ efforts of five species of small cats.

However, there is almost no connection between the Red List priorities and financial support. One exception is the Andean mountain cat project supported by Wildlife Conservation Network where a solid connection exists between a Red List Endangered Species and financial resources. Generally, however, a disconnect exists between financial support and those species most in need according to the world's cat authorities.

What is the AZA doing for the small cats most in immediate need? Well, frankly, not much. But this lack of support is acknowledged and frustrating for some AZA members as well. One trusted colleague expressed his frustration with the present situation:

*It has been very frustrating trying to get programs established for even the five SSP species (Sand cat, Black-footed cat, Pallas cat, Fishing cat, Ocelot). These species were selected partially based on our ability to locate and import enough individuals to create a genetically-viable population.*

*Beyond getting enough founders, our main problem is finding exhibit space for small cats. We have about 500 exhibit spaces in 215 AZA institutions for all eight small cat species (the five SSP species plus three PMP species: caracal, serval, Canada lynx.) We require an absolute minimum of 100 spaces for each species for proper genetic management so we're not even reaching that goal at this point.*

*Zoos don't think that small cats make good exhibit animals so convincing them to house more small cats is very difficult. That is one reason that we are trying to get some collective efforts from the various small cat SSPs in 'marketing' small cats to the zoos. Without institutions willing to take offspring, breeding programs just grind to a halt. Pallas' cats are a good example: Cincinnati had 24 founders for that population (an incredible number for a small cat) but only 15 zoos currently house the species. Cincinnati has 12 Pallas' cats and unless a zoo takes some of these cats, Cincinnati won't be producing any more offspring in the near future. A private breeding effort (say with Andean Mountain*

*cats) would face similar hurdles—a lack of institutions willing to take on the offspring. [JGS—I do not agree with this assumption.]*

*Other major frustrations involve some of the international programs that we are trying to initiate for small cats. As you know, it is very difficult to get these programs established and running properly without the constant presence of a North American or European collaborator. We focus on identifying motivated in-country collaborators and then providing them with the necessary resources and training to get the research or breeding programs running but after we head home, the programs inevitably start to unravel. The ones that succeed best are those that have a Western scientist directly managing the program in country. I'm convinced that captive breeding programs in range countries need U.S. keepers and managers on site to run the program. That can become prohibitively expensive to maintain over time—the Thailand clouded leopard and fishing cat breeding program is a prime example.*

The ocelot is the most common spotted cat in the Americas and is listed as Least

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Concern on the IUCN Red List. The Smithsonian Institution project referred to above is allowing us to learn more and more about less and less, satisfying our scientific curiosity at the expense of more threatened species of far greater conservation concern. Of course, conservation is not the objective of the project. Worse, as time passes extracting the tens of individuals from shrinking wild populations that the AZA requires for genetic management of the species becomes impossible. After all, about the last thing conservationists want to do is remove breeding adults from the population—the very segment of the gene pool we want to see increase in number. Clearly, the disconnect between resources and needs is already too wide.

What is the role of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with respect to conservation efforts of threatened small cat species?

Jeff Flocken has specifically recommended that USFWS encourage partner zoos i.e., White Oak Conservation Center, Smithsonian's Center for Research and Conservation, Fossil Rim, The Wilds, and San Diego Zoological Society, to breed populations of "Rare Small Wild Cats (such as the Andean mountain cat, bay cat, and flat-headed cat)" with the unstated goal being that USFWS might partner with them in the future on research and reintroduction programs for these species—using successful past efforts in zoo/USFWS partnerships such as the Mexican wolf and the black-footed ferret as models.

The criteria Jeff used in suggesting these species are as follows:

1) A threatened species that is in danger of disappearing in the wild altogether (as opposed to a species that has had a major population crash but is still numerous in the wild, such as black-tailed prairie dogs);

2) A species that is not already successfully bred in captivity (for example, orangutans and Bengal tigers are in trouble in the wild, but there is already a well managed captive population with many individuals and an active zoo Species Survival Plan in place);

3) Species where it makes sense for the U.S. to play a meaningful role in captive breeding (as opposed to ones where it would be more logical for range states with adequate infrastructure to take the lead, such as the Iberian lynx or giant panda);

and

4) Species of current or probable future interest to the Agency, so that any captive breeding programs ultimately will create a path for a meaningful future partnership with USFWS during research and reintroduction stages.

What is the role of organizations like the Feline Conservation Federation, a group of private individuals whose members keep captive cats? This is a question that FCF members should think long and hard about. In my view the efforts of the members of FCF are extraordinary and the role you all play should be expanded to include rare and threatened species and in situ educators. I urge you to come up with a viable, coherent program whereby the members of FCF can become actively involved in in situ zoo training for keepers and enclosure upgrading and construction. Prime examples in immediate need are keepers and facilities with flat-headed cats in Malaysia, and Chinese mountain cats in China. A days worth of training is not enough and a proper model enclosure cannot be built in day. However, the keepers are keen to learn and things are a lot cheaper outside the North America, Europe, and Japan. I have the in situ contacts. The measure of success of such programs is captive breeding.

Many model conservation efforts exist for threatened species. Exxon's Save the

Tiger Fund has invested millions of dollars into in situ Tiger conservation. Wildlife Conservation Network's Andean mountain cat project is another example. However, there is clearly a need for more model projects that support in situ conservation efforts for the already Endangered bay cat, and other small cat species now listed as Near Threatened but suspected by cat authorities as in need of conservation efforts.

The stakeholders are US Fish and Wildlife Service, its special partner zoos, AZA through the Felid TAG, private organizations whose members keep captive cats, representatives from European and other foreign zoos, the Cat Specialist Group small cat authorities, and donor organizations interested in small cat conservation. Someday we should have a meeting to create cooperative conservation strategies.

While our conservation efforts at times seem mired in the La Brea tar pits, eight Chinese mountain cats languish in harsh and unspeakable conditions in Chinese zoos and breeding facilities. Flat-headed cats in Sumatra, peninsular Malaysia, and Borneo find their way into state run holding facilities that fall short of being as good as concrete prisons. Bay cats enter these concrete pens in Sarawak and a few weeks later what is left of their limp bodies is tossed in the garbage.

Change is long overdue. •

## The Zoological Association Of America invites you to join

There are several levels of membership - Associate, Professional Zooculturist, Public Facility, Non-public Facility and Commercial. Membership fees vary and some levels require sponsorship.

ZAOA web site: [www.zaoa.org](http://www.zaoa.org)

e-mail: [iszn@c2i2.com](mailto:iszn@c2i2.com)

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## Meeting Minutes, First Quarter 2006

The FCF Board of Directors first quarter meeting was held via internet forum from noon February 8 until midnight, February 28, 2006 with president Bob Turner presiding.

Kevin Chambers reported that the Midwest Exotic Feline Educational Society (MEFES) passed its review for FCF branch status.

Lynn Culver reported that the membership handbook revision committee, comprised of Lynn Culver, Laura Walker and John Chuha, finalized their work and that the new handbook had been sent to Carolyne Clendinen for production.

The fourth quarter 2005 financial report was presented by secretary/treasurer Harold Epperson, but the 2005 annual financial report was not finished.

Several agenda items were discussed and the following actions were taken:

Moved by Bobby Bean, seconded by Carolyne Clendinen, that FCF close all the KHMSF accounts and deposit all KHMSF money and all other FCF money into the General Fund, keep \$5000-8000 in checking for operating capital and deposit the remainder of FCF General Fund money into staggered 12+ month CDs in increments of \$5000 earning a minimum of 5%, effective immediately. PASS 6-3

Moved by Lynn Culver, seconded by Bob Turner, that the FCF approve the spending of the FCF gift certificate from Furham Diversified to purchase another net every close in price to the \$250 value of the gift certificate, (no more than \$50.00 over for net and shipping costs) to be used as a demo net for the husbandry course. PASS 8-0

Moved by Kevin Chambers, seconded by Bobby Bean, that additional funds be made available in excess of the \$50 called for in Lynn's motion, should they be necessary, in order to purchase a net of sufficient size to be used for a lynx or serval, thus allowing the net to be useful for other FCF projects in addition to use as a demo for the husbandry course. PASS 8-0

Moved by Kevin Chambers, seconded by Bob Turner to approve the minutes of

the December 2005 Special Meeting: A special meeting of the FCF was convened December 6, 2005 and adjourned December 13, 2005 for the sole purpose of appointing the person to fill the vacant position of Director of Membership Services on the FCF board of directors. A vote during the 2005 fourth quarter meeting had resulted in a tie. President Robert Turner conducted the balloting by phone between Debi Willoughby and Carolyne Clendinen. Carolyne received the appointment by a vote of 8-2. Those FCF board members participating in the meeting were Robert Turner, Kevin Chambers, Harold Epperson, Carol Bohning, Evelyn Shaw, Marcus Cook, Lynn Culver, JB Anderson, Robert Bean, and Tracy Wilson. PASS 8-0

Moved by Bobby Bean, seconded by JB Anderson, that no fundraising of any kind other than the banquet auction / donated sale table items be allowed at the convention. PASS 7-0

Moved by Kevin Chambers, seconded by Bob Turner, that the motion made by Bobby Bean and seconded by JB Anderson be amended by adding "without prior approval of the FCF Board of Directors." The amended motion would read, "No fundraising of any kind other than the banquet auction/donated sale table items be allowed at the convention without prior approval of the FCF Board of Directors." PASS 9-0

Moved by Kevin Chambers, seconded by Lynn Culver, that we approve the 2006 FCF budget with the changes agreed upon. PASS 8-0

Moved by Lynn Culver, seconded by Kevin Chambers, that the automatic FCF list moderation be removed and placed only upon members that repeatedly fail to follow the rules established. First infraction receives a private warning, second infraction places the list member on moderation. PASS 7-0

Moved by Kevin Chambers, seconded by Bob Turner, that we ratify the 4th Quarter 2005 minutes as previously approved. PASS 9-0

Moved by Bobby Bean, seconded by Kevin Chambers, that Life Director J. B. Anderson contact the former Directors of Conservation and Education, Tracy Wilson and Leann Montgomery, on behalf of FCF for the return, or replacement cost, of FCF property that has not been returned as per FCF bylaw 7.6. The motion reads that these items are a capture net donated by Fuhrman Diversified, Inc. for use as a teaching tool in the FCF Husbandry Course valued at approximately \$400.00 and a laptop printer with carrying case and ink cartridges valued at approximately \$225.00 purchased by FCF for use in the FCF Husbandry Course. The capture net was last known to be possessed by Tracy Wilson. The printer was last known to be possessed by Leann Montgomery. These past FCF directors are legally responsible for the return or replacement cost of these items that are the property of FCF as per FCF bylaw 7.6. PASS 7-2

Minutes prepared by Kevin Chambers, at the request of Secretary/ Treasurer Harold Epperson. •



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—Shelleen

# African Golden Cat

## *Profelis aurata*

*Kevin Chambers*

The African golden cat is a medium-sized central African species. They weigh up to 28 pounds with a body about three feet long, a shoulder height of about 19 inches, and a tail about 16 inches long. There is a wide variety of colors. They range from reddish-brown to gray to black melanistic individuals. There was a report of a captive cat changing from red to gray over a 4-month period at the London Zoo in 1907. Spotting also varies from very spotted to spots only on the belly. This



follows a generality that the spotting is lesser as you go from west to east. The chin, chest, and belly are white with prominent black spots always occurring on the belly. The tail also always has a dark dorsal stripe and ends in a black or brown tip. While African golden cats have a similar appearance, they are not closely related and the similarity is credited to both species evolving in a forest environment.

African golden cats are found across the African equatorial belt. They prefer the rain forest regions, but also range into secondary forest regions and have been known to adapt well to logged areas with dense undergrowth.

There has been very little research done in the wild with African golden

cats. It is known to be mainly nocturnal, resting in trees during the day while doing some hunting during the diurnal period. A study of 60 scats in Zaire found a composition of 51% small rodent species weighing less than 300 grams and 20% remains from the duiker, a small antelope weighing about 20 pounds. African golden cats have also been known to scavenge eagle kills and to prey on injured primates that have fallen from the canopy. Birds also are preyed upon, but the small rodents make up the bulk of the diet.

There isn't much information on the



breeding cycle of African golden cats. Their gestation is known to be 73 days with a litter size of one or two. Surprisingly, captive born kittens were known to open their eyes at one week of age,

where most cats don't do this until two weeks. They seem to be very fast developers in other ways as well. At two weeks of age, they are able to walk well and by three weeks, they are able to jump onto low structures. They begin to eat solid food at six weeks of age. They become sexually mature at 18 months. The longevity record is 12 years.

The African golden cat's status in the wild is not entirely known due to insufficient study. They appear to be doing well in the Congo region where large expanses of pristine rain forest exist. They are listed on Appendix II of CITES.

At the current time, there are no African golden cats known to be in captivity. The Max-Planck Institute in Wuppertal, Germany had some African Golden cats that they bred and a couple of litters were hand-raised back in the early 1970s. Probably the last person to have one in captivity was John Aspinall at his Howlett's Zoo in England. ISIS has only been getting good data since the late 80s so there is a lot of information on historic cats they do not have. Since there has never been a studbook compiled for this species, no one has really done a historic search.

The biggest problem facing the African golden cat in the wild, as with most feline species, is deforestation and the loss of habitat. There is little hunting pressure because the African golden cat is taboo to many local tribes, though there are a few that use the fur in ceremonial dress. •

# Feline Cytauxzoonosis

## A Growing Problem in the Southern States

*Gordon McDonald, DVM*

For those of you who are not familiar with the disease Cytauxzoonosis, I urge you to learn more. This devastating disease in domestic cats has been shown to affect some exotic species as well. Cytauxzoon felis is a hemoproteoan (blood parasite), which is almost always fatal in domestic cats. This disease occurs mostly in Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina and Florida. In 2005 I saw many more cases of this disease in my practice in western Arkansas than in previous years.

It is known to be carried by bobcats and has also been documented in blood samples of the Florida panther. In a 1990 paper published in the *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*, it was noted that the prevalence of cytauxzoonosis in the Florida panther and introduced Texas cougars in Florida was 39% and the study documented the presence of this parasite in the blood of an 8-day-old kitten. It further suggested that the Texas cougars were infected in Florida, as they tested free of the organism prior to their release in Florida. These chronically infected felines did not appear to be suffering any negative effect on their hematologic parameters. Both bobcats and cougars have evolved to co-exist with this organism and can be infected but show no clinical signs. When blood was drawn from the infected Florida panthers and injected into a pathogen-free domestic cat, it subsequently died of cytaux 11 days later.

Cytaux is transferred to other species via the Ixodid Tick. Sporozoites are injected into the animal along with the saliva during a tick bite. Groups of these organisms develop within the lining of the smaller blood vessels. These groups are later found in the erythrocyte (red blood cell), and later sexually mature organisms are found within the erythrocyte. When another tick feeds on these erythrocytes, mating occurs within the gut of the tick. Then the sporozoites migrate to the mouthparts of the host tick and are injected into another animal during feeding, thus spreading the disease.



Krysten Sanders

**Samantha, a cougar from Rebel Oaks Exotic Animal Sanctuary**

The organism invades and parasitizes red blood cells and macrophages resulting in hemolysis and anemia. As the organisms multiply and the disease progresses there is enlargement of the spleen and lymph nodes. Occlusion of major vessels of the spleen, lymph nodes, lungs and other organs occur. Clinical signs associated with Cytauxzoonosis in domestic cats include: high fever (103 to 107°F), anorexia, labored breathing, dehydration, jaundice, anemia and lethargy. The parasite attacks blood vessels in all organs; heart, lungs, liver, kidney, spleen; the kidneys and liver quickly overload with damaged blood cells and the ears and eyes and gums take on the telltale yellow coloration of jaundice. In less than three days from the onset of visible symptoms more than 99% of infected domestic cats will die.

Although the bobcat and cougar seem to be carrier hosts and usually manage to avoid any clinical disease, there is serious concern that non-native wild felines have not evolved a defense against this organism and are highly susceptible. The first documented case of cytauxzoonosis in an exotic feline was a white tiger in Florida that died of the parasite in 1996. Since then, there are also documented cases that resulted in fatalities in African leopard, lion, serval, Pallas cat, Siberian and Canadian lynx.

No successful treatment protocol has been established. Supportive care and broad-spectrum antibiotics are the only recommended course of treatment but seem to be of very little use.

Tick control of all exotic and domestic felids is very important. Frontline products (produced by Merial) are the tick prevention products of choice. It is recommended that this product be used at least every 30 days. Treatment of the environment is also very important.

Veterinarians and researchers at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK, are currently working on a vaccine to help prevent this disease. There is no other vaccine available at this time. •





Uniting a Proactive Primate and Exotic League (UAPPEAL) a non-profit 501(c)4 organization was founded in January 2006 by Barbara Doherty and Mark McDaniels. The organization's purpose is to unite all responsible private exotic animal owners and to ally with other respected exotic animal groups and organizations that share the same mission statement to create a single strong voice against federal, state, and local legislation that is banning the right to keep and care for exotic animals by responsible private owners.

U.A.P.P.E.A.L. represents all exotic animals without bias to species. As a non-profit 501(c)4 organization, U.A.P.P.E.A.L. is permitted unlimited lobbying efforts to support our cause unlike a 501(c)3 organization who can only use a small percentage of their annual income towards lobbying. The Feline Conservation Federation and Simian Society of America are 501(c)3 organizations. Our goal is to offer a voice as an organization that is unlimited thus adding to the efforts of the 501(c)3 organizations, not take away. There is strength in numbers. Individual effort is commended and applauded, plus organizations with a strong membership can be highly effective. We encourage you to support the FCF and all organizations that further enhance your lives as responsible animal owners.

U.A.P.P.E.A.L.'s funds are focused towards the lobbying effort on state and federal levels to protect our rights as responsible private owners. U.A.P.P.E.A.L. has contracted a noted lobbyist with many years of experience and is known as a

heavy hitter. We have a current campaign to raise funds for a federal lobbyist that has done some pro bono work for us and has agreed to work on a federal level for a modest retainer. The Ferguson Group has a staff of 46 staff working there, most of them lawyers and most of them former staff people of US senators or congressmen. They are one of the most respected lobbying firms in Washington DC and they currently represent over 150 cities and counties throughout the United States. Bill Hanka is a former staff member to Vice President Dan Quail during the first Bush administration.

U.A.P.P.E.A.L. has also hired a grant writer/researcher to pursue funding in the form of government and private grants to help with lobbying costs.

While U.A.P.P.E.A.L.'s primary purpose is fighting punitive legislation, we also contribute to education, rescue, and placement efforts.

U.A.P.P.E.A.L. has designated groups of animals that are referred to as an "element." The element representatives compose our board of directors. This ensures dedicated, knowledgeable people are representing your animal of interest.

U.A.P.P.E.A.L.'s website is located at <http://www.uappeal.org> Contributions to the UAPPEAL lobbyist fund, can be mailed to: UAPPEAL treasurer, 2533 Branch Creek Rd, Venus, TX 76084.

*Mark McDaniels*  
*President U.A.P.P.E.A.L.*

## **U.A.P.P.E.A.L. MISSION STATEMENT**

Uniting a Proactive Primate and Exotic Animal League is an organization to further the social welfare of nonhuman primates and other "termed" exotic pets in captivity by working to maintain the civil rights of responsible ownership of companion animals by individuals who choose to share their life with an alternative pet.

Uniting a Proactive Primate and Exotic Animal League is developed to protect the rights of conscientious private exotic pet owners willing to meet their multifaceted physical and social needs by lobbying to prevent unfair regulation, discouraging the casual acquisition of exotic pets through education, and further help with rescue and placement of abused, neglected, and abandoned exotic animals as per the strict guidelines set forth by Uniting A Proactive Primate and Exotic Animal League.

# Bobcat Fever

*Janelle Gourley*

This is a very hard and heart breaking subject to write about. I had never heard of Cytauxzoonosis or Bobcat fever, then out of the blue it hit! We had two beautiful tigers, Sabera and Shandar. One day I noticed that Sabera was just not acting quite herself. Sabrea's appetite dropped, we called the veterinarian. The vet came out and started Sabrea on antibiotics. She did seem to feel better for a day or two. Then I noticed her lips and mouth seemed jaundiced she was weak. By that evening she was gone. We had a necropsy done at OSU and the results confirmed our worst fears: Cytauxzoonosis.

We were—the only way I can express it—in shock. In three or four days our beautiful healthy energetic cat was dead. All we could do was pray that her mate Shandar had not been infected. We sprayed his area, sprayed him with flea and tick dip. We could not see a tick on him, but as strangely as it sounds, we could not find any on the body of other cat either. It appears it only takes one bite to infect a cat.

I am sorry to say this was not enough. Shandar became ill also. At the time we knew nothing to do but await the inevitable and hope he would be a one in a million and survive. This was not to be. I sat with him hour after hour. Shandar was to be with us only five more days.

We moved our other two tigers to the other side of the lot, to a new compound. We continued to spray the area and the cats. For over a year we had no more problems I had hope this had been a one-time sad occurrence. Then one day I noticed Shadow was not eating with her usual gusto. We wasted no time. We called Dr. Corr of Thunder Bird Veterinary clinic and had her out at once. Troubles was not acting herself either. Dr. Corr said she had heard of a preventive treatment that had seemed to work in some house cats. Cytaux is a protozoal organism. We had

hope if we had caught it soon enough, perhaps a anti-protozoal drug preventative development of the disease might save the cats.

Dr. Corr made it clear to us that this was only to be considered a preventive, and that we should not get our hopes up. We thought any thing was worth a chance to at least save one of the cats. Dr. Corr administered Imidocarb to both tigers. This was intended as a preventative after several cats in the area had contracted the disease. This was strictly a hopeful measure. Shadow did unfortunately pass away three days later. Troubles was given Imidocarb twice, one week apart. I think the treatment saved her. She did not at least go on to develop a full-blown case of the disease. We will never know for sure if she was or was not infected but I would recommend taking the chance of treating any exposed cats if you are ever faced with the same situation.

There is no cure for this disease, hopefully one will be found soon. In Oklahoma Dr. Meinkoth of OSU is doing research in this area. In the meantime the only way to fight the problem is tick prevention. We are now using Frontline Plus monthly on the cat.

For the area in and around the pens we found a spray that seems to be very effective.

It is called Tempo SC mixed with liquid 7. This mixture is sprayed lightly over the ground once a month. The Tempo SC kills in minutes; the liquid 7 lasts about a month. The animals may return to the area as soon as the spray is dry. This has been more effective than any other spray we have found. Tempo SC can be purchased from Estes Inc. The Oklahoma City address is 1819 N.W. 5th. Street Oklahoma City, OK. 73106. (800) 234-9795. The home company address is Estes Inc. PO Box 9227, Fort Worth, TX 76199.

Did you know that a field survey of wild bobcats in Oklahoma showed that up to 62% of wild bobcats in Oklahoma are carriers of Cytauxzoon felis? If you own other bobcats, you might want to have your captive cats tested, just to be sure they are not silent carriers. Please don't forget house cats if they are outdoors or exposed to cats from outdoors, see they are treated with Frontline also.

I wish you all and your animals well and hope you never have this experience, but if you do, please know you are not alone. We had never heard of Cytauxzoonosis and felt as if we were the only ones to have been affected by it. After many tears and sleepless nights I know what you are going through. •



**Troubles the tiger, a Cytauxzoonosis survivor**

Krysten Sanders





## Captive Wildlife Tracking System

The same system used by biologist to track wild animals is now available for your captive wildlife. An FCC legal, waterproof transmitter attached to a rugged collar emits a pulsed radio frequency signal that can be picked up several miles away with a 100-channel radio receiver. You can easily keep track of 1 to 100 animals with one receiver. The system can be used anywhere in the USA and does not rely on satellite technology (GPS) or any cellular or PCS infrastructure. Works indoors as well as outdoors and there is no monthly service fee!

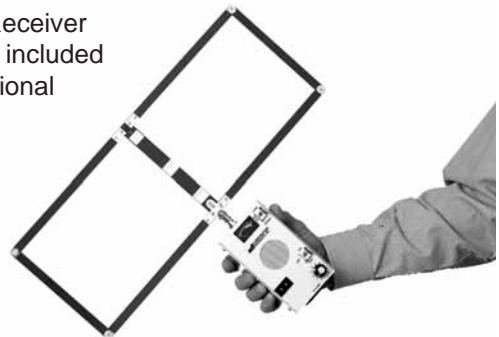
**PT-2W** Transmitter Collar with CR123A  
Battery for over 1 month of continuous use

**\$150.00**



**WR-100** Receiver  
shown with included  
FA-1 Directional  
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**\$250.00**



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# Two views on the FCF Exotic Feline Husbandry Course

*Mark Levinson*

I enrolled in the FCF Exotic Feline Husbandry Course hoping to acquire more knowledge training to help me qualify for a USDA Class C Exhibitor's license to possess bobcats. I also looked forward to meeting some kindred spirits who love cats, and get connected with an organization that serves people like us.

The experience was far more beneficial and enriching than I expected. I thought I knew a lot already, but from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Carol Bohning went through an agenda that was incredibly broad, deep, informative, relevant, and extremely interesting. There is no question in my mind that anyone interested in owning and exotic feline should take this course. It should be mandatory! Carol covered everything from the different species, safety, government departments and laws, diet, enclosures, all aspects of care, behavioral and environmental enrichment, and much more, all in a friendly, warm, and clear fashion that everyone enjoyed. Kevin Chambers, who provided valuable input and answered questions from his personal experience, assisted Carol at times. I think the course would have been a bargain at ten times the price. At its current cost, it can only be described as a most valuable gift. The level of commitment, knowledge, purpose, and passion is beyond price.

The handbook that outlines the course is a substantial reference document. To verbally sum up what I learned would probably require me to write a book! Without doubt, I am more qualified now to possess bobcats than before and better able to ensure their safety. But there are deeper levels of understanding created by the course that have actually changed my life.

I understand much better the responsibilities of exotic feline ownership, the issues involved in the global situation, the dangers to animals from being owned by unprepared individuals, and the enormous benefits that result from communicating with those who have had years—if not decades—of experience. One can never learn enough.

An additional benefit was the optional



Mark Levinson

## Husbandry course field trip to Exotic Feline Rescue Center

field trip to the Exotic Feline Rescue Center, about 45 minutes away from the hotel where the course was given. I can only describe this visit as truly life changing. The dedication of Joe Taft, Jean Herrberg, and their associates is amazing. You'll never truly "get it" unless you visit. It's like music—it can be described but not transmitted without direct experience. The EFRC not only provides a great service to animals and the community, but also is living testament to the dangers that exotic animals face every moment from those who are unprepared or unable to care for them and for the terrible suffering that animals endure for countless reasons. The message is vast and deep. To sum up, one could say, "Don't even think about owning an exotic feline unless you are totally prepared and committed to potentially decades of constant caring, loving, and working for the animals welfare." To understand what that entails, the FCF course taught by Carol is extremely valuable and the visit to the EFRC was as well. The FCF and the EFRC both deserve and need the financial support

of everyone who care about and loves exotic felines.

My new business concerns a new and exciting audio technology called Burwen Bobcat. Details are at [www.danielhertz.com](http://www.danielhertz.com). The Bobcat name and logo are used because of the acute hearing abilities of bobcats. Their beautiful ears reflect the beauty of music itself. Not the noise associated with some popular electronic nonsense, but the real acoustic music that has been a deep part of the human experience for thousands of years, like animals themselves. My hope is that Burwen Bobcat will generate revenues that can be used to benefit animal welfare, including the FCF and the EFRC.

My deepest thanks to Carol and her associates for making this course available. I won't mention all the names, but you know who you are. I do want to thank Pam Hotle in particular for inviting me to meet her 4.5-year-old bobcat Claude, and for encouraging me to take the course in the first place. How right you are, Pam. •

*Greg Lyons*

There was a lot of material to cover. Much of it is available other places, but you'd have to look lots of places to get all of it and the class has the advantage of giving it to you all at once. You also have something certifiable after getting a passing grade on the test, in case that's a requirement in your state or province. Probably almost as useful as the knowledge gained from the class itself, is the ability to actually talk to other exotic cat enthusiasts face-to-face.

The topic is really large enough that there's plenty of material to fill up more than one class—or perhaps a two-day class. For example, the politics of keeping exotic cats is such a mess that it would be good to have some kind of primer on that. I got home and went through my e-mails Sunday night to learn about an alleged “investigation” of a number of exotic animal owners by the API. New and prospective owners need to be well aware of the politics of

exotics so they don't unknowingly do anything to give the AR activists fodder for their attacks on our right to own these animals.

It would have been nice to see in the course something more about responsibility and commitment to the animal before you even start the wheels in motion to get the permits. For most of the attendees it would have been preaching to the choir, but a basic introductory course would seem to be an appropriate place to try to instill that ethic if it's not already there.

It was nice to have someone there from the Exotic Feline Rescue Center, Center Point, IN, to give us their perspectives on issues that came up and I enjoyed seeing the cats in their facility during the tour. But, of course, the circumstances that resulted in many of those cats having to be there were sad. If the owners had behaved responsibly, most of those cats wouldn't have ended up there. Touring that facility also gave me a much more graphic idea of what's actually

involved in keeping an exotic cat. The first thing I saw when I walked into the gate was several people cutting up a cow or steer carcass to feed to the cats; it shouldn't have gotten my attention, but it did. Reading (or even being told) that cats are obligate carnivores and need to eat raw meat and bone is just so sterile compared to actually seeing a cow being cut up and the parts being put into an ATV to be taken to the cats. I think seeing the cats face-to-face and being told their respective stories really helped drive home the point that we need to be responsible with these animals.

A list of on-line information resources would have been nice, in addition to the list of equipment, supplies, vendors, and state regulatory agencies that was supplied in the book.

Overall I thought the course was very good and I just hope that I'm able to use the information I learned there someday, in other words, I hope I'm actually able to have an exotic someday. •



Mark Levinson

Joe Taft of Exotic Feline Rescue Center talks tiger



# Animal Rights and What You Can Do

Kevin Chambers

Recently, an animal rights group produced an “exposé” video on the evils of private ownership of exotic felines. This group used video taken at several private facilities by posing as visitors from Europe wanting to visit Americans who had cats. The video was then edited and commentary added to show how private owners keep their animals in substandard conditions and endanger the lives of others. This video is being used as a tool in states where this group has proposed legislation banning the private ownership of exotic felines.

Granted, the AR group producing this video took some very big liberties in some of the claims they make in the video, but the fact remains that they obtained the raw video. They are using this edited version to influence the public who don’t know the facts. The public is susceptible to such misinformation. The AR group will show this to whomever they want and there isn’t much that we can do to change that or combat it. The lesson to be learned from this is to think about your policies on allowing visitors and what you can do to avoid being used the next time they try this. There is nothing illegal about them taking pictures, particularly if you have invited them on your property, so it is up to you to maintain vigilance.

When a visitor arrives, put forth your best behavior. Engage them in conversation in an area where they can’t see your cats to start out with. Find out what you can about them by asking them as many questions as you will undoubtedly be asked. Remember that you will most likely be lied to if the visitors are undercover operatives, but it gives you opportunity to evaluate their responses and body language. Talk about other facilities or people that you both know to see if they give answers that don’t raise any red flags. A person visiting your facility is there only with your permission and you should never feel bad about cutting a visit short should you have the slightest bit of apprehension. You are not obligated to tell a visitor anything or to show them anything. Try to be courteous if you feel you need to ask the visitor to leave. Remember a “previous engagement” or some other reason why you can’t give them

any more time. Should they become defensive about not wanting to leave, don’t confront them and argue. Simply walk away and contact law enforcement since they are now trespassing.

So, they passed your initial test and you feel they are ok. Before you invite them to see your cats, consider whether your pens and facilities are in a condition that you wouldn’t mind the entire world seeing. You wouldn’t invite someone into your house if it were upside down and you shouldn’t invite them to see your cat facilities if they aren’t something you could be proud of. The AR group video had footage of several facilities that weren’t in the best condition, either because of house keeping or weather (rain equals mud). No matter how you could explain to them in person why things are the way they are, they can get photos and say anything they want to, putting you in a bad light. Asking people not to take photos may not help you since many times they will have hidden cameras and you wouldn’t know if they take photos or not. The key is not giving them the opportunity to see something that they could twist against you. Ask the visitors to come back another time if you need to do a little tidying up.

While taking the visitors into your cat area, it is best if you have another person with you to help watch the visitors. Before entering the area where your cats are, give visitors a short list of rules like staying together and no reaching into the pens. Sometimes one person out of a group will split off to “look” at something else. This person could be taking pictures or might even try touching or going in with a cat. Visitors must *always* stay together since you cannot watch both the cats and several people at one time. If they don’t, end the session at once. This is your place, you are in charge, and it is up to you and your helper to maintain control.

We all love to show off our cats and show people how wonderful they are. Just be mindful if you do this. *never* give someone you just met direct exposure to your cats! The best-behaved cat in the world can bite or scratch if someone does something to it that it doesn’t like. Sadly, in this day and age, you just can’t take any risks. If the visitor were to twist the cat’s ear or poke it

in the eye to draw a negative reaction from the cat, that’s not what they would say or tell the media. It would simply be reported as a vicious attack by a wildcat.

If you enter a pen with your cat, never allow the visitors to be standing in a direct line with the door to be opened. Ask them to go outside the perimeter fence, or other secure area *before* you open a gate with a cat on the other side. This may sound a little overboard but videos have been made saying that you endangered the public by opening the gate without a barrier between the visitors and the opened door. The pride you get from showing how wonderful your cat is could turn into a nightmare if the visitors are out to do you harm.

Animal Rights groups can get you despite your best-laid plans. Lies and even sneaking into your place can be used to get what they want. Some groups will stop at nothing. Unfortunately, we can’t defend against things like that. What we can do is try our best to put forth our best foot and make it more difficult for them to get their dirt. The biggest thought to keep foremost in your mind is not to just think responsible ownership, but to live it. •

## What’s All This Animal Rights Stuff?

The term “Animal Rights” (AR) is designed to be confused with animal *welfare*. Those who support animal *welfare* want animals to live healthy lives free from disease, pain, or fear. Do you know any pet owner who does not share these values?

Animal *rights* are not limited to animal welfare. Proponents of AR believe that all sentient (situationally aware) animals are of equal or greater value compared to humans. Moreover *all* relationships between humans and animals are inherently exploitive in favor of the humans. (It may be difficult to imagine how that cat sunning herself on your couch is being exploited by you, but AR activists never let the obvious get in the way of their doctrine.) —MF



# “The Ocelot Experience”

## Dallas Zoo’s Educational Website Features the Ocelot

*Cynthia Bennett, Ph. D.*  
*Curator of Conservation Education*  
*and Science*  
*Ken Kaemmerer,*  
*Curator of Mammals*  
*Dallas Zoo*

Because ocelot recovery is a bi-national effort, it is important for education to address school systems and regional cultures specific to northern Mexico, southern Texas, and other areas where ocelots occur or may be introduced.

The Dallas Zoo’s Conservation Education and Science Department has developed an interactive bilingual web-based program about the ocelot, entitled “The Ocelot Experience,” which may be accessed at [www.dallaszooed.com](http://www.dallaszooed.com). The goal was to provide a solid platform designed to be useful for students in the Texas education system, appropriate for school age children in Mexico, and one that can be used as a resource for developing a more comprehensive conservation education program (e.g., adopt a school programs, bilingual training, bilingual coloring books, curriculum that can be adapted by teachers from either country, a mechanism to address the digital divide, etc.) It should be noted that this educational venue was not intended to completely address the concerns of variable lev-

els of literacy and access to computers that occur both within and between the United States and Mexico. However, this venue can provide contiguity between the citizens of the United States and Mexico by focusing on species that concern both countries.

This website adds an educational component to conservation work with ocelots. It

was created to help raise the awareness of its endangered status and to encourage action in protecting the ocelot. The targeted audience for the website is fourth through sixth grade students with either English or Spanish as the primary language; the opening page allows viewers to switch to either language. The website contains basic information on the natural history and conservation status of the ocelot, as well as an interactive demonstration of field research. Interactive components include a matching game and a section allowing viewers to paint line drawings of ocelots and other wildlife in assorted colors and then print them off. The website encourages students to become field researchers and to utilize math, science, reading, and geography skills. The education components were designed to meet Texas State Education and National Science standards. The new web program also provides a mechanism to evaluate its effectiveness via a pre- and post- experience quiz. To date, this is the only internationally accessible public education program with the ocelot as its primary focus. •

<http://www.dallaszooed.com>



# More thoughts on caging

*Bart Culver*

We've had some great articles on caging recently and I thought I would add my perspective as a mechanical engineer with 20 years experience building cat habitats. First, some basic principals on exotic cat caging:

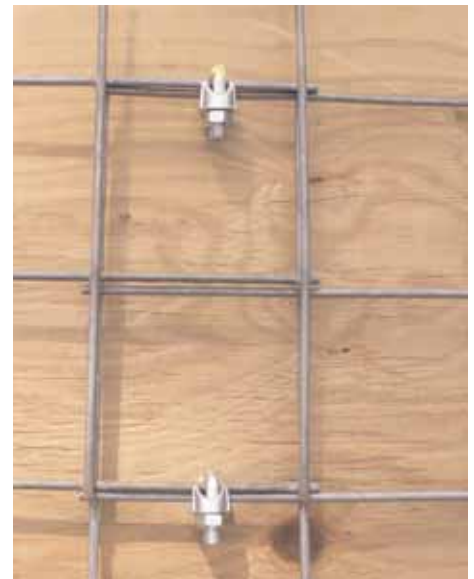
1. An escaped cat is a dead cat.
2. You can't dispel the hysteria AR fanatics spend millions cultivating by telling your neighbors what your cat won't do, only what it can't do, i.e., the cage must be convincingly strong.
3. Cages must withstand not only the strength of the combined animals but all forces of nature, including wind, ice, falling trees, truly wild animals digging in, etc.
4. Smaller cats are capable of projecting their consciousness and their bodies very nearly as far and fast as larger cats. They all need and deserve room to run at top speed, play structures, places of shelter and concealment.

5. For all these reasons, you cannot scale the cage size down in proportion to the size of the cat. There are certain minimum dimensions, and these are much larger than AZA or USDA minimum standards. This means there are minimum spans and load capacities for even the smallest cats. Since small cats can squeeze through small holes, it can actually be more difficult to confine them than large cats.

My first cage was the worst mistake I ever made. It incorporated living trees into the structure. It had trees for corners and shade trees growing up through the roof. It looked great, but over the years it forced me to become a tree surgeon using climbing spurs, high lines and even bucket trucks. The wire panels I stapled to the trees cut into the bark as they grew, eventually killing them. Strong winds caused the shade trees to rub against the roof, girdling and killing them also. I speak from experience,



**Tools you will need. L to R—Wire bending tools: homemade, telescoping, square tubing for bending up to 4 gauge wire through narrow openings. Flat bar with notches to bend 6 and 4 gauge wire, pair of tools to wrap 12 gauge wire around 6 gauge panels without ruining galvanizing made from automotive fuel line covered with gas line tubing. A piece of 22-rifle barrel would be better. Various angle pliers, side cutter, needle nose, French cage ring tool from Harbor Freight. Homemade tools eliminate lots of fumbling and bleeding.**



**Three photos above: three ways to join wire from weakest to strongest method.**



if you must attach wire panels to trees, always nail a treated 2 by 4 to the tree and then staple the panels to that. As the tree grows it can push the 2 by 4 out, thus avoiding being wounded or girdled by wires.

After numerous trials and errors, I gravitated to the curved panel “skin strength” type cage discussed in previous articles. They go up quickly and are very efficient use of materials. I like the Quonset huts for smaller cats because tarps stretched over them last three times longer than on flat roofs. Vertical wall structures with plenty of curves are surprisingly strong and can be made much larger. Both type structures require almost no posts. But there are two critical places where posts are absolutely required:

1. All door openings should be rigidly framed. Panel doors can be hinged to a wood post with three-inch fence staples. If a T- post or pipe is used, set the post so the panel extends an inch or two beyond it so you can hinge the door panel to the wall panel with cable clamps. Never use hog rings for this. Use three or more hinges and the door panel will be stiff enough on the door side. But you will need to stiffen the door panel on the jamb side with a vertical piece of one-inch angle iron or square tubing, welded or securely wired to the panel.



**Use of wire wrapping tools to join panels.**



**Joining to a line post**

This will stiffen the door so that a cat can't flex it and squeeze past the door jamb.

2. Also, a post must support any roof beams. Otherwise, a fallen tree or an ice load will unzip any number of hog rings and spot-welds. Hog rings are great for assembly purpose, but cannot be relied for strength because they do not encircle the panel wires. If they aren't stainless steel they start to rust immediately, along with the cage they are attached to. Always use cable clamps secured with a drop of Loctite, or 9-gauge-galvanized wires wrapped securely around the panel wires several times. I found every two to three feet adequate.

Panel edges should be overlapped by one opening (four inches of Barker panels) and the longitudinal wires clamped together inside the overlap. This puts tensile loads on the wire itself and not on a spot-weld. Never trust spot welds to bear a structural load. They are made with galvanized metal, and are therefore contaminated and unreliable.

A thought about joinery: The strongest and cheapest connection you can make is to cut the last transverse wire off both panels and hook the longitudinal wires around each other and then spiral each wire around itself. This can be a bit tedious.

Ground connection is important. Although cats don't dig, we have been amazed at the numbers of armadillos, opossums, skunks, and raccoons who are determined to commit suicide by digging into our bobcat cages. Definitely a force of nature. You can sink the walls into a slit trench and fill it with concrete. Or you can cut the bottom horizontal wire off the panels and drive the 4-inch wire ends into the ground by laying a bar across the next horizontal wire and pounding on it with a mallet, up and down the fence. For really hard or uneven ground, you can cut strips of paneling and drive them in from the top, then wire them to the cage walls. Just a little steel or concrete will discourage most digging creatures or delay their success until you can notice the activity.

Avoid placing stresses on spot welds. Avoid stresses that tend to pull the staples out of the wood. Have a complete encirclement of steel and in all cases place sharp edges and staples outside the cage for animal safety and ease of inspection and repair. •



**Top to bottom:**  
**(top)** Joinery with one panel inside, one panel outside. Cage is to right.

**(middle)** Outside corner joinery - for 10 extra points which panel is backwards? A - the one on the left. It has vertical wires facing inward. Horizontal wires should face inward.

**(bottom)** Both panels inside post.



Save the date!      It's that time!  
Let's make plans!      Don't miss out!



Cheetahs Chance & Bravo



Minnow the Fishing Cat

**The Feline Conservation Federation  
2006 Annual Convention  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
July 26-29, 2006**

Your convention committee is hard at work to make this convention better than ever! We are planning days of fun and felines and lots of surprises that you don't want to miss!

Just a glimpse of things to come:

**Wednesday:** FCF Husbandry Course taught by Carol Bohning

**Thursday:** Board meeting and evening icebreaker

(Did someone mention surprises?)

**Friday:** Membership meeting and field trip with behind the scenes fun at the Cincinnati Zoo and Narnia, home of Cathryn Hilker

**Saturday:** World renown guest speakers including conservationist Cathryn Hilker and FCF Conservation Advisor Jim Sanderson, Ph.D, evening banquet and auction (Did someone mention more surprises?)

More details are on the way. See registration form in newsletter. Limited rooms. Register early to save



My job takes me to a ceramics factory in Zibo, China several times a year. The employees always look forward to the latest edition of the FCF magazine. The photos always lead to discussions and a more compassionate view of wildlife. The factory guard dog is now quite spoiled and there are two domestic cats underfoot. — Bob Elliott

## FCF Upcoming Events

### ***Playa de Oro Tours:***

**May 19-26, 2006** with tour guide professional photographer Terri Nash

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

### ***Husbandry Course:***

**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 next issue of the FCF magazine. Register today!

