

# F C F



**Feline Conservation Federation**  
Volume 50, Issue 3      May/June 2006



# Feline Conservation Federation Officers and Directors Contact Information

**Founder: Catherine Cisin**

**Copy Editor/Layout:**

**Mike Friese**  
204 S. Batavia Street  
Orange, CA 92868  
714-532-4041  
mike@friese.com

**OFFICERS:**

**President:**

**Bob Turner**  
4467 E. Dayhuff Rd.  
Mooresville, IN 46158  
317-831-0817  
robert.l.turner@gm.com

**Vice President:**

**Kevin Chambers**  
7816 N CR 75 W  
Shelburn, IN 47879  
812-397-2302  
ZooARC@worldnet.att.net

**Secretary/Treasurer:**

**Harold Epperson**  
3310 Remington Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46227  
317-889-3922  
hpepperson@aol.com

**DIRECTORS:**

**Conservation/Education:**

**Carol Bohning**  
P.O. Box 711  
Johnstown, OH 43031  
740-966-6059  
Lynxrufus@voyager.net

**Advertising and Publicity:**

**Marcus Cook**  
25 Highland Park Village, Suite 100  
Dallas, TX 75205  
866-755-9735 (toll free)  
marcus@zoopros.com

**Membership Services:**

**Carolyn Clendinen**  
10816 Lucasville Road  
Manassas, VA 20112  
571-252-0527  
clendinens@hotmail.com

**Legal Director:**

**Evelyn Shaw**  
13262 Cleveland Road SW  
Pataskala, OH 43062  
740-964-9040  
ecvshaw@yahoo.com

**LIFE DIRECTORS:**

**J.B. Anderson**

1825 E. Nashville Church Rd.  
Ashland, MO 65010  
573-657-4088

**Robert Bean**

P. O. Box 26201  
Knoxville, TN 37912  
865-938-0702  
wildcon2b@aol.com

**Lynn Culver**

141 Polk 664  
Mena, AR 71953  
479-394-5235  
culvers@voltage.net

**Nanette McGann**

10100 SW 21 Terrace  
Miami, FL 33165  
305-553-8192  
denofnm@aol.com

**DEPARTMENTS:**

**FCF Feline Facility Accreditation**

**Chairman:**

**Kevin Chambers**  
7816 N CR 75 W  
Shelburn, IN 47879  
812-397-2302  
ZooARC@worldnet.att.net

**Conservation Advisor:**

**Jim Sanderson, Ph.D.**  
1919 M Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20036-3521  
USA  
202-912-1803  
gato\_andino@yahoo.com

**BRANCHES:**

**MEFES: Midwest Exotic Feline Educational Society**

**Pam Hotle**  
5821 W Mooresville Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46221  
317-856-1115  
PHotle1@comcast.net

**CHECK OUT OUR NEW  
FCF WEB ADDRESS!**

**The new FCF web site is now online  
at [www.theFCF.com](http://www.theFCF.com)  
You can also find us at [www.lioc.org](http://www.lioc.org)  
and [www.felineconservation.org](http://www.felineconservation.org)**

**Members are invited to participate in  
e-mail list discussions on-line at:  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/  
The\\_FCF/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The_FCF/)**

**On the cover: Cheetah dishes out a licking to Pieter Kemp, Savannah Cheetah Foundation. See article. Background: Furcos Brothers' Sinbad. Photo by Zuzana Kukol.**



**Cheetah kittens at Savannah Cheetah Foundation  
Find out how you can visit them on page 31.**

## Feline Conservation Federation



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

---

Letter from the President . . . . .	4
Bekera, My Wonderful Cougar . . . . .	6
Dr. Keither Jeffers . . . . .	8
The 35 <sup>th</sup> Annual FCF Convention . . . . .	10
Felid TAG 2006—Denver Colorado . . . . .	15
Felid TAG—A Member’s Experience . . . . .	22
Observations of Felid TAG . . . . .	23
Select Presentations from the Felid TAG . . . . .	24
Comparison: Two Public Zoos and a Private Sanctuary . . . . .	28
Blast from the Past: Saga of “Red” . . . . .	29
Trip to Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, Belize . . . . .	30
Private Cheetah Breeding Program too Successful? . . . . .	32
Convention Auction . . . . .	34
White Lion Debuts on Letterman Show . . . . .	36
Cougar Sanctuary . . . . .	38
Proposed Constitutional Amendments . . . . .	40
Board of Director Candidates . . . . .	42
The White Lion: the King of Kings . . . . .	43
A Tiger named Pepper . . . . .	45

Copyright © 2006 Feline Conservation Federation. All rights reserved. Some material is reprinted with permission of other copyright holders.

### Advertising

All ads in this publication are void where prohibited by law. All transactions are between buyer and seller. All buyers and sellers must have proper licenses and permits for all animals offered for sale or sold. FCF, Inc. does not necessarily endorse or guarantee the honesty of any advertiser. FCF, Inc. reserves the right to edit or reject any subscription ad. No blind animal ads will be accepted. Only FCF members may place ads listing cats for sale. Adoption ads are free of charge for cats that need good homes where no money is involved in the transaction. All ads must contain the name of business or individual advertising. Ads must state whether the individual is a private owner or broker. Full current address with a phone number must be stated in the ad. Display ads are \$10 business card, \$25.00 quarter page, \$50.00 half page, \$100 full-page ad. Color ads available, contact Director of Advertising and Publicity, opposite page, for price quotes.



## Letter from the President

### The classroom of mushrooms

With the approach of spring, days are getting longer and the temperatures are climbing upward for us in the northern regions. It's time for outside projects to be completed like picking up downed tree limbs and twigs. In my case the removal of downed trees were due to an 85 MPH wind storm. Next, getting out the lawn mower from storage with the hope it will start.

Spring, by far, is my best time of the year. I love the new life that spring beholds upon us, like the new tree leaves with their fresh new green color, spring songs of the birds, especially the robins, and wondering if any of the robins are the ones I raised and released last year. I watch the migrating geese and ducks on our lake, the baby rabbits at the woods edge, and the sweet sound of our female bobcats crying for a boyfriend, while our neighbors wonder who is being killed. Of course, spring mushroom hunting reinforce that spring has sprung

Mushroom hunting here in central Indi-

ana is basically from April 18 to the end of April. On April 17 I put on the tick repellent and went out in the woods for my first of the season mushroom hunt to my favorite mushroom hunting areas. I was climbing hills, fighting my way through thick brush and berry briars, trying to look out for snakes and not stepping on one and scaring myself and the snake to death, and feeling the imaginary ticks crawling up my pants legs and in my hair. I had a great time finding one small mushroom.

I got back to the house to tell my wife, Pat, that I found just one small mushroom and that they are not up yet. Pat is in her eighth week of recovery from a broken back and still is in a fiberglass body cast, smiled and showed me the 12 mushrooms she found in the yard while doing walking exercise for her back. The doctor wanted her to walk to exercise her muscles. Guys! It reinforces the nature's law that the ladies are the top cats, even with broken backs.

Back to snakes: I like snakes and in no way would I harm one, but they do raise my heart rate when one surprises me. I get a little of that from my mother who is so afraid of snakes. I tell her that she does not need to worry about snakes because when she sees one, she screams it to death.

Spring also allows me to get back to doing another one of my favorite things: running the cats for their exercise. Our four cat exercise runs are 12' x100' and I have as much fun as the cats with me throwing the ball as hard as I can down the full length of the runs and watching the cats run at top speed chasing the ball. Many times I wonder why out of billions of humans on the earth I was one of a few chosen to share my life with the lovely wildcats. Sharing is so wonderful. —Bob Turner

*Just A Thought: If humans purred like cats when happy and content, what would the sound be like in a fine restaurant?*



Pat, Kyra, and Bob appear on a Christmas card



## Purrrfect for Your Exotic Cat!

Delight your felines! Feed them **Mazuri® Feline Diets** - a constant formula diet supplying complete life cycle nutrition for reproduction, lactation, growth and maintenance. They will thank you from whisker to tail

For more information, visit us at **[www.mazuri.com](http://www.mazuri.com)**  
or call **1-800-227-8941**, for your nearest Mazuri® Dealer.

**Mazuri**®  
The Exotic Animal Feeding Resource

**Mazuri® Feline Feeds:** Exotic Feline Large-5M53, Exotic Feline Small-5M54

# Bekera, my wonderful cougar

*Vincent Dimaggio*

I have always been fascinated with large and small cats. Ever since I saw Charlie the Lonesome Cougar when I eight years old, I wanted a cougar. That movie inspired me. I wanted that special relationship that the forest ranger had with Charlie.

I have had snakes since I was a little kid. And when I grew up, I wanted to have a zoo. I want to have a relationship with all sorts of animals

Before I got finally a cougar, I got a timber wolf. I purchased him from a breeder in Jasper, Arkansas and I bottle-fed him from three weeks of age. We named him Jasper.

The lady that I bought my wolf from showed me a web site of a bobcat breeder who had mountain lions. I called and spoke with Lynn Culver. She told me she wasn't breeding cougars for sale anymore but she invited me down to visit and meet all the various felines they raised.

I will never forget the first experience with a real cougar. Lynn and Bart invited my then bride-to-be Beverly, and I into this



**Bekera the cougar visits Tristan the tiger. Tristan was featured in the Nov/Dec 2005 FCF magazine.**

5-acre area called Cougar Country. It was surrounded with a ten-foot fence. Lynn closed the gate behind us and we were

locked inside this Arkansas jungle with her and Bart. She began to whistle and we heard a bird like sound answer back that she said was a cougar named Mishi. And I heard this faint ringing sound that was the cowbell he wore on his collar. He was sneaking through the woods, but the ringing of the bell let us know he was coming closer. He was about 20 feet in front of us before we could finally see him. He took about two pounces and was sailing at eye level with Bart. Bart deflected him with his arm and Mishi fell to the ground and Bart said "good Mishi, good kitty" in a soft, baby voice.

Mishi was purring and so visibly happy to have company. He was about five months old and my heart was pumping a million miles an hour and I was more excited then I had ever been. I was finally in the company of a real cougar and I knew this was my destiny. At first Beverly was scared, but when she saw how friendly Mishi was, the fear melted. She used up a roll of film taking pictures of Mishi and me that day.

Bart told me about how special Mishi was. He was the son of Sharu, who was the son of Mercury, the cougar that started it all. He was also the result of assisted reproduction. Bart told me he wanted Sharu's genes to pass on. He was Mercury's first

## WildLife

### Whole Prey Pet Foods



**All natural frozen meat diets specifically formulated for exotic carnivores.**

**Consumer Quantities or Bulk Shipments to Sanctuaries & Zoos**

**We ship consumer quantities by UPS three day air so your pet food arrives cold. Palletized Truck and trailer shipments available to those that need large quantities.**

**We know what your carnivore needs because we are exotic animal people!**

**See us online at [www.wildlifepetfoods.com](http://www.wildlifepetfoods.com) or call 360-651-9050 M-F 9AM-6PM PST**



### Josh and Bekera enjoy a nap

son and only surviving brother of their first litter. At 16 years of age he was too old and arthritic to breed Sheila naturally, but a researcher friend of theirs helped him succeed and she gave birth to Mishi.

I told them I wanted to buy a cougar but Lynn explained that all their cougars were old, except for Hercules, who was too young. They had stopped breeding cougars for sale and were breeding cats like bobcats.

The next spring Beverly and I were now married and we decided to buy a bobcat kitten, since they were pretty special felines too. We returned a few months later for another visit and to pick up our kitten. Bart and I spent about three hours with Mishi. This time he was on a leash and Bart instructed me on proper handling and he even let me discipline Mishi. He said I had passed the test and he was willing to try to produce a cougar kitten for me.

About a month later, we bought another bobcat from another bobcat breeder. Now the pair had each other and they took over our house. We really enjoyed them.

I called Lynn regularly to see how things were going with Sheila. Her first heat with Sharu did not result in a pregnancy. And so Lynn decided to introduce Sheila to young Hercules. It got off to a rocky start. Her-

cules has his claws and he ripped Sheila open and they had to be separated for a month while she healed and when she finally came back into heat they tried putting them together again. This time Hercules was more gentle and patient and he finally figured out the proper way to court a lady cougar.

I knew I was going to get a cougar, so I got busy building a cage so I could apply for an Arkansas G&F breeder/dealer permit. All pet mountain lion owners had to apply for this permit. The G&F based the cage requirements on the FCF model. The deadline for issuing any new pet mountain lion permits was the end of December 2005. So it was a now or never dream for me.

The cage I built is 1,000 square feet built out of 4 by 4 treated wooden posts and the ten-foot tall cage is covered in 4 by 4 welded panels. The cage has a double-door entry and is completely surrounded by an eight-foot tall perimeter fence, that is about ten feet away from the cage.

I applied for my breeder/dealer permit in

## Finally, a healthy pure meat treat for cats!

### WHOLE FOOD TOPPERS

From the makers of Oasis Vitamins comes an enrichment treat full of natural nutrition in morsels of pure digestible meat protein.

Whole Food Toppers is available in Pure Chicken, Pure Beef, Pure Salmon and Pure Liver. All our meat selections are human grade and freeze-dried to lock in freshness.

Visit our new website and check out our new look and new products for Stress, Oral Health & Hairballs

*Specialized Nutrition*  
Formulated by  
**DR. GARY PUSILLO**

**1-866-807-7335**  Complete Natural Nutrition  
[www.completenaturalnutrition.com](http://www.completenaturalnutrition.com)

**5% Discount for All FCF, LIOC  
& Phoenix Exotic Members.**

late November and my local G&F officer was really nice when he arrived to do the cage inspection. He signed me off that day. And now, it was just a matter of time before Sheila would deliver my cougar kitten

A single kitten was born December 12, an early Christmas present for me. I picked her up at 5½ weeks of age, and had arranged to have two weeks off work in January to bond with her.

We named her Bekera. She was wonderful and I raised her in the living room and slept with her every night. If she woke up I was there to bottle feed her or let her suck my thumb and fall back asleep.

Beverly's son Josh is a large Arkansas-bred thirteen year old. He gets along with Bekera exceptionally well and she loves him to death.

Instead of returning to work in two weeks, everything changed. I had some stomach problems that kept me home for another two weeks. And the doctor ordered some tests run and it was discovered I had colon cancer. It was as if my guardian angel was watching out for me. At my age, early thirties, who would have thought this could happen? But this deadly disease was discovered early enough that the surgery performed on me March 13 successfully removed the entire tumor and I will not have to have follow-up chemo or radiation treatments.

There were some complications though, and instead of a two-week stay in the hospital, it turned into nearly a month. Beverly, bless her heart, took care of the wolf and bobcats and cougar and drove six hours

round trip every day to visit me. She is such a wonderful wife.

When I first got home, I'd lost 45 pounds and was very weak. I had to be careful with Bekera. The first thing she did when she saw me was run up and hit me on the head with her forehead and started purring and let me hold her for five minutes.

I am feeling wonderful now. Bekera lives outside and I visit her several times a day. We also leash her up and bring her in the house to visit.

I will be off work for seven more months. I will be able to spend more precious time with Bekera as she grows up then I would have if I had to go to work every day. Colon cancer brought me this one silver lining, but I don't recommend it. •

## Dr. Keith Jeffers 1921—2006

On January 29, 2006, Dr. Keith Jeffers passed away less than a month before his 85th birthday. After five years, the man known as "Dr. J" lost his battle with Hairy Cell Leukemia. Aside from his family, there was nothing my father loved more than animals and the people who love them. Many of you were on a first name basis with Dr. J, even though you had never met. His commitment to making customers his first priority continues even after he is gone.

Jeffers Pet started more than 30 years ago when my father retired from McDonnell Douglas and began selling livestock supplies out of the basement of our home. Our first catalog resembled a small church bulletin. My mom would drive the back roads of Missouri and stop at any farm that had cows in the field. We would offer the farmer a free copy of our catalog and that's how the business began. As the years passed, Jeffers added equine supplies and as I grew older, my love for pets and the desire to find quality products at reasonable prices were the catalyst for our very popular pet catalog.

Jeffers will continue to be a family run business. My mother, Dorothy, will continue to serve as chairman of the board. My



sister, Mary Antonelli, will continue to provide friendly, personal service in our retail store and I'm committed to working hard with the pet division as I have for the past 16 years.

The best way we know to honor my father's memory is to continue running Jeffers with hard work, determination and an understanding our customers are always

right.

Thank you for the love you've shared with my family during this difficult time. Your prayers, emails, and phone calls have meant more to us than you'll ever know. As always, if you have any questions, complaints, or suggestions, don't hesitate to call us at (800) 633-7592

—Ruth Jeffers



# Jeffers

Premium Products for the  
Health & Care of Your Pet



Shop On-Line at  
**JEFFERS PET.COM**

Full Line of Supplies for Cats - Large and Small



**Safe-Guard Paste with Fenbendazole**  
I6-S2, 1DS \$5.99

**Standard Stainless Steel Bowls**  
G3-F4, 5 qt \$3.45  
G3-F5, 10 qt \$10.95



**Jolly Ball Critters™**  
H7-J2, chipmunk 3" \$5.25  
H7-J3, squirrel 4.5" \$7.99  
H7-J4, raccoon 5" \$11.49

**Heavy Weight Stainless Steel**  
G3-HG, 3 qt \$6.45  
G3-HJ, 5 qt \$8.70



**Chase'n Pull Toy**  
BE-V2, \$14.95

**The Best Ball™**  
HU-B1, 4 1/2" D \$4.95  
HU-B2, 6" D \$6.85  
HU-B3, 10" D \$9.95



**Performer® Ear Mite Killer with Aloe**  
A2-H2, 6 oz \$3.95

**Egge® Cat Toy**  
BD-D1, 13" L \$18.95



Call for your **FREE** catalog today.

# 1.800.JEFFERS

**\$10 off your next order of \$50 or more.**

When ordering online or by telephone, enter code ZZ-F3.  
Limit 1 per customer. Excludes Zupreme products.

# The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual FCF Convention

The time is here to finalize your plans to attend the FCF convention in Cincinnati July 27-29. The convention chairman Robert Bean and his committee members have been working hard behind-the-scenes to arrange an event that will not be forgotten. After the 2003 convention in Cincinnati some people said that it could not be topped. Well, hold on to your hats folks because you are about to be blown away by the best convention ever. How else would you expect it to be considering this is the 50th birthday for the FCF?

Convention kicks off Wednesday, July 26 with the FCF Exotic Feline Husbandry Course. Director of Conservation and Education Carol Bohning will instruct the participants in the basics of natural history of wild felines, regulatory agencies and permits, facility design, handling equipment, diet and nutrition, health care basics, disposition and handling, behavior conditioning and contingency planning. This course has been given positive marks from state Fish & Game agencies and the USDA.

Thursday morning begins with the FCF

Board annual meeting. FCF members are welcome to attend. Throughout the day Thursday, everyone checks in at the hospitality room, drops off auction items, plays with cats, shares photos, browses the vendor's booths, and we guarantee, learns something new from everyone there.

Thursday evening's icebreaker reception provides plenty of food and drink to fuel your tank for the great times that lie ahead. Get together to shoot the breeze while you reunite with old friends and make new ones. As an added bonus, there is a very



Mindy Stinner

Some members who attended the 2003 convention

## 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 website, 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.

*Vincent Enriquez is the April winner of the drawing for early renewal of FCF membership!*



Mindy Stinner

special surprise planned for this night, and we must warn you that missing the ice-breaker may lead to depression once you hear what you missed.

Friday starts off with a trip to the world famous Cincinnati Zoo. FCF attendees will be granted behind-the-scenes tours of the brand new hospital, the CREW building and the various cat facilities, and even their white lions. The Cincinnati Zoo cat collec-

tion houses bobcats, caracals, clouded leopards, fishing cats, black-footed cats, Geoffroy's cats, margays, ocelots, Pallas cats, pampas cats, Arabian sand cats, Siberian lynx, snow leopards, cheetahs, Indochinese tigers, white tigers, and white lions. That's 17 different species. And then there are those other great zoo animals too. Lunch will be provided at the zoo followed by a private performance of the Cat Ambas-

sadors Program, trained by Cathryn Hilker and her staff.

After the zoo we board the buses to ride to Narnia, the home of Cathryn and Carl Hilker. Besides being the founder of the Cat Ambassador Program, Cathryn also started the Angel Fund, named after Cathryn's first cheetah. While at Narnia, we will relax in the shade of the lovely surroundings and enjoy Graeter's ice cream sundaes. This regional favorite is so good it'll make your eyes roll back in your head.

The FCF annual membership meeting will be conducted at Narnia. Members can share their thoughts on projects and the future of the organization. If you have something you would like placed on the agenda, contact Bob Turner. Candidates for

## EXOTIC ANIMAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

Zoological Animals  
"Alligators to Zebras"

### *Mitchel Kalmanson* *Insurance Counselor*

- Animal Mortality  
Claim / Loss Evaluation(s)
- Consultation Services(s)
- Rare & Unusual Risk(s)
- Domestic and / or Exotic Animal(s) Considered
- Individual and / or Commercially Owned Animal(s)

**LESTER KALMANSON AGENCY, INC.**  
**P.O. Box 940008**  
**Maitland, FL 32794-0008 U.S.A.**  
**Telephone (407) 645-5000 - Fax (407) 645-2810**  
*Website: [www.lkalmanson.com](http://www.lkalmanson.com)*



Fishing cat

the upcoming election will jump up on the stump and speak their mind too.

No trip to Narnia is complete without the ambassador cats, including the cheetahs and Minnow the fishing cat. Be sure to bring your camera along. It will be another one of the “don’t miss” opportunities at this year’s convention!

The day isn’t over yet as we settle down for a summertime picnic dinner to celebrate FCF’s 50th birthday. Besides the savory fare, we will be having birthday cake too.

Saturday will find us back at the hotel with a full lineup of guest speakers including:

**Jim Sanderson**, world-renowned feline researcher will update us about the conservation status of small cats throughout the world. Jim is the FCF conservation advisor and has visited South America, China, and Southeast Asia this past year. This will be his third presentation before the FCF.

Pat Callahan, Cincinnati Zoo head cat



Mindy Stinner



## MEAT COMPLETE WITH TAURINE

RAW MEAT SUPPLEMENT FOR ALL CARNIVORES

**Based on whole prey composition, this supplement balances the nutrients lacking in skeletal muscle meat-based diets for carnivores: vitamins A & D (normally supplied by the liver), B vitamins (from gut contents of whole prey), and of course calcium (found in bones). This supplement also contains added taurine – an essential amino acid for felids – and the antioxidant vitamin E.**

**CENTRAL NEBRASKA PACKING, INC.**

**PO BOX 550 ~ NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA 69103-0550**

**1-877-900-3003 ~ 1-800-445-2881 ~ FAX:1-308-532-2744**

**EMAIL: cenpack@kdsi.net WEB PAGE: www.nebraskabrand.com**

keeper will speak on his recent trip to Africa to capture and study black-footed cats.

**Bobby Hartsliel** will have an in-depth presentation on the Savannah Cheetah Foundation, a 3,000-acre preserve that is embarked on a cheetah captive breeding and reintroduction project and student educational camp. Be sure to read more about the SCF elsewhere in this magazine issue.

As always, the grand finale to every FCF convention is the banquet and fun fundraiser auction held Saturday night. From lovely evening gowns to blue jeans to kilts with dirks, all fit in.

Everyone will have the chance to cast a vote for the award given to the magazine's photo of the year along with the editor's choice of reporter of the year. The most coveted award, the Lotty will be awarded to the person that has shown unusual devotion and service to the FCF, its members, and the exotic felines.

After the delicious banquet meal, JB Anderson decked in his trademark white



Mindy Stimmer

tuxedo, top hat, white gloves, and fuzzy tiger slippers will take center stage and conduct the auction. It certainly will be a night of fun, friends, and felines.

Don't miss this special FCF birthday party event. Fill out your FCF convention registration form included in this magazine and mail back with a check for \$130 per person to the treasurer before July 11. Reserve your \$69.00 per person special FCF rate hotel room by calling 1-513-563-

8330. Rooms are very tight this year, so make your reservation ASAP!

The Holiday Inn I-275 North happily accommodates pets. If you plan to bring along your exotic feline friends, you will need a current health certificate and *please* contact convention chairman Bobby Bean at 865-938-0702 or e-mail him at WILD-CON2B@aol.com for requirements set by the state and local agencies for import of exotic wildlife. •



Juvenile ocelot

**ZOO QUALITY  
SINCE 1972**

**FLEXI-NETS™**

**FurMont™ Reptile Hooks**

**FIELD-CAM™ VIDEO SYSTEMS**

**EDUCATIONAL-INTERACTIVE-SCIENTIFIC**

**FD FUHRMAN DIVERSIFIED, Inc.**  
(281) 474-1388 FAX (281) 474-1390  
2912 BAYPORT BLVD. / SEABROOK, TX 77586-1501

**WEB SITE: [www.fieldcam.com](http://www.fieldcam.com) email [fdi@flash.net](mailto:fdi@flash.net)**

**MEMBER: AZA, AFS, TWS, WMI, SSAR, SR, AOU, ASIH, DTC, ABS**

**TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**Dick Van Patten's Natural Balance®  
Zoological Formulas™**

**DICK VAN PATTEN'S  
Natural Balance  
CARNIVORE DIET**

- All Beef
- All Stages
- 5, 10, and 15% Fat
- Emulsifies Easily
- Palatable
- Better Stools
- Very Clean
- Leak Proof Casings
- USDA/FSIS
- Available in 1,2, 5 lbs
- Bones Available

Dick Van Patten's Natural Balance® Zoological Formulas™  
12924 Pierce Street, Pacoima, CA 91331 - 1 (800) 829-4493 - [www.naturalbalanceinc.com](http://www.naturalbalanceinc.com)  
Contact: Martin R. Dinnes, D.V.M., Dipl. ACZM, Director, Product Research & Development  
[zoovet@naturalbalanceinc.com](mailto:zoovet@naturalbalanceinc.com)



AMERICAN ZOO AND AQUARIUM ASSOCIATION

# Felid TAG 2006—Denver Colorado

## Four different Felid TAG experiences

*As experienced by Lynn Culver*

I got off to a late start. Thursday evening American Airlines called to inform me that the red-eye flight I had booked for Friday morning was cancelled. I was now on the 10:00 am flight and it left Little Rock late and it missed the Dallas connection. Then the next flight left late and I didn't arrive at the TAG until 3:30 Friday afternoon. I missed all the morning speakers and the first half of the working group session.

### **Husbandry Course Working Group**

Working groups are the TAG's way of dividing participants into several smaller groups to tackle a variety of issues and projects. Five hours over a two-day period were devoted to develop the concept of a big cat/small cat husbandry course that can be offered to feline zookeepers to educate them on proper husbandry. One would imagine that the various zoos train their employees—but TAG wants to do the educating. Question is: educate whom about what? Who decides? Who determines the course materials? Who will teach the course material? I still don't know. That will take another planning session further down the road. Unlike the 24/7 for the life of the cat that we private owners put in, zoo employees are part-time transients. In fact it was stated that the average turnover for keepers is just six years, so there is a constant need for more training. It will be interesting to see if this grand plan pans out over the next year. The goal is to have the first such class at next year's TAG.

### **Transportation stress in tigers**

This study included tigers of various ages, transported various distances, by various means of carriage. The researcher looked at the pool of subjects before and after crate training and during transport and after transport. Various graphics demonstrated the tiger's cortisol levels did raise after transport, and there was less increase in tigers that had a prior experience of being moved from zoo to zoo.

Not exactly earth-shattering results, more of a case of documenting what we can all logically assume will happen. Probably the only unanticipated result was the finding that stress hormones can raise as much as 333% from the stress of a translocation. The process took about 12 to 14 days to settle back to normal, but what was also strange was that there was another stress hormone increase approximately 6 to 12 days following their recovery to normal.

### **Avian Flu—what to do about it?**

*Karen Terio, University of IL*

We have all heard and read about the expected global pandemic from bird flu. When will it hit the US and how will it affect captive cats in zoo situations?

The avian flu is a form of influenza that attacks the respiratory and gastrointestinal tract. There are low pathogenic and high pathogenic viruses. Currently H5N1 affects wild bird and poultry, and is very rare in humans but there are some cases documented in cats. Between 2003 and 2006 this virus has killed clouded leopards and leop-

ard cats and tiger that were feed infected quail. In 2004 tigers fed chicken became sick and after the feeding of chicken was discontinued, a subsequent tiger to tiger transmission occurred.

The prevailing opinion is that the western US is most at risk of avian flu by the migration of wild birds using the Pacific flyways which originate in Russia and cross down Canada through the western US on their way to the bottom of South America.

At this point the strongest advice is to practice good hygiene and avoid feeding wild birds to captive cats.

### **Conservation Centers for Species Survival**

*Jack Grisham, National Zoological Park*

Jack Grisham described the grand plan for offsite breeding centers for endangered species that fail to produce in public zoo settings. The concept is for a cooperative application of unique resources that incorporates large areas, off-exhibit to the public with access to veterinary expertise. Specifically White Oak Plantation, FL, Fossil Rim, TX, San Diego Wildlife Park, CA, National Zoo Park Conservation and Research Center, VA are participating conservation centers.

These captive situations would help develop fundamental biology of animals needed to develop conservation programs.

In a joint meeting with the US F&W agency, the AZA community was given a list of 89 species that the F&W would like to see bred in captivity. The AZA group



Lion enclosure at Cheyenne

was interested in perusing about 30 of the listed animals.

### Lynx Poop and Reintroduction of Canada Lynx in Colorado

Kerry Fanson

Kerry Fanson, who contributed the article on hormone research in the March/April FCF magazine, gave a historical look at Colorado's reintroduction of Canada lynx. The good news is that mortality has been greatly reduced and the species is finally beginning to reproduce.

In 1999 Colorado brought 20.22 lynx from Canada and released them. In 2000, another 20.36 were released. Due to the high mortality and lack of reproduction, no new lynx were added in 2001 and 2002. Then Colorado F & G switched their protocol, keeping the cats in an acclimation pen to settle them in while feeding them well to insure that when they were released they had high body fat levels. Another 16.17 were released in 2003, 20.18 in 2004 and 20.18 in 2005 and just 7.6 in 2006. There was no evidence of reproduction for a full five years, but that trend is now reversed with several documented kittens being born.



Carol Bohning gives husbandry presentation at AZA Felid TAG

Kerry is examining collected fecal samples from these translocated lynx and from captive lynx to perform fecal hormone metabolite analysis and learn more about estrogen, progesterone, androgen, and gluco-corticoids. She has approximately 2,500 samples from wild lynx and 1,500

samples from captive animals. Her preliminary data suggests that both males and females show a rise in estrogens and androgens beginning in March. The hormone levels of pregnant lynx bounce around more than other species. And there seems to be a gender differences in stress response, with



# Lions, Leopards and Lynx

## We know what each one drinks

Zoologic® Milk Matrix™ is a complete, scientifically integrated system of five milk replacement products that can be used alone or blended. Used according to specifications, Milk Matrix accommodates virtually every species of wildlife or zoo mammal – simulating mother's milk in critical areas such as protein, fat and lactose. With precise formulation and a comprehensive mixing guide, it's a system utilized by nutritionists, veterinarians, keepers and wildlife rehabilitators all over the world. To learn more about the Zoologic Milk Matrix System, visit [petag.com](http://petag.com) or call 1-800-323-0877.



 ©2006 PetAg, Inc., 255 Keyes Avenue, Hampshire, IL 60140 [www.petag.com](http://www.petag.com)



*Specializing In Manufacturing Exotic Carnivore Diets*  
*Since 1960*



**BRAVO**  
**PACKING, INC.**  
Carney's Point, NJ 08069

**Using Fresh Meat & Only Prime Cuts of  
Meat in All Meat Eater Diet Products.**

**CHOICES OF MEAT EATER DIETS**

- \*SUPREME 100% HORSEMEAT
- \*PREMIUM 50% BEEF & 50% HORSEMEAT
- \*REGULAR 100% BEEF
- \*Bird of Prey 50% BEEF & 50% HORSEMEAT

**CHOICES OF FORMULATIONS OF MEAT**

**PORTION WITH TRIPE, VITAMINS & MINERALS**

- \*90% HORSE 10% TRIPE & 5% FAT
- \*40% BEEF & 40% HORSE 10% TRIPE & 10% FAT
- \*80% BEEF 10% TRIPE & 10% FAT

**\* SPECIAL ORDERS CHUCK BEEF & HORSEMEAT**

**\* RAW BONES BEEF & HORSE WITH & WITHOUT MEAT**

**\* ALL BEEF PRODUCTS OBTAINED FROM U.S.D.A. INSPECTED PLANTS**

**\* ALL MEAT IS SAMPLED & TESTED FOR B.S.E. BY U.S.D.A.  
VETERINARY TECHNICIANS**

**Bravo Packing, Inc. MAINTAINS FULL PRODUCT LIABILITY**

**Contact Us at: Toll free (888) Bravo40**

**Visit Us at: [www.bravopacking.com](http://www.bravopacking.com)**

the males exhibiting less stress than females, and the wild lynx overall having higher stress hormones than captive animals.

### **Cheetah – influences in age on oocyte quality and uterine health**

*Adrienne Crosier,  
National Zoological Park, DC*

The highly studied cheetah continues to be of great interest to the AZA community. The AZA has managed to hold onto their near total monopoly on this species, with the historic population high of 330 cheetahs in the mid 90's that has steadily fallen to its present level of just 210 today. This nearly 33% population drop is due to several years that the SSP dictated a moratorium on breeding and that period was followed by several years of failure to successfully restart the breeding program. In fact, the population would be in much more dire straights if it weren't for the importation of over 40 individuals during 2001, 2002, and 2003. Studies document that the best age for artificial reproduction is seven years. Over the age of nine, nearly 70% of captive cheetahs have uterine hyperplasia.

### **FCF – Husbandry Course and Conservation Grants Program**

*Carol Bohning, FCF*

Our own Conservation and Education Director, Carol Bohning gave a great presentation on the FCF husbandry course, noting FCF has presented it before over 400 students in 17 states. Considering the AZA TAG was struggling to develop their own course, we certainly looked ahead of this curve.

Carol then directed their attention to the FCF conservation grants program, and the number of conservation projects being supported by FCF members. She let researchers attending know we have our applications online as part of the FCF web site. She outlined the wildly successful African safari raffle project that raised an additional \$3,800 for the FCF conservation grants.

A complimentary copy of the January/February FCF magazine was distributed to the nearly 100 attendees of this TAG. Included in it was an article by Ken Kaemmerer on the ocelot translocation project being promoted as part of the ocelot species survival plan. FCF is funding the cost of camera traps needed to survey the area for native predators and prey species

prior to the release of ocelots.

### **Species Survival Plan Reports**

**Cheetah SSP** – Jack Grisham, SSP coordinator, titled his talk “Cheetah SSP—the good, the bad and the ugly.” Jack explained that while there are 300 cage spaces reserved for this charismatic flagship species, (way more than any other feline species) far less than 250 animals exist to fill them, and many of these are post reproductive or never produced. I guess that is the good and the bad, all rolled up into one.

As for the ugly, it takes a few more sentences to cover. In March of 2006 a final master plan was distributed by e-mail to all AZA zoos, and disappointingly it was discovered that the feedback loop appears broken. That is, the directors of zoos are not receiving this plan and therefore are not cooperating with breeding and transfer recommendations to facilitate the “survival” of this species in zoos. In fact it was noted that there is only a 27% compliance rate with the cheetah master plan.

Why is the species headed in such a downward spiral? Feline infectious peritonitis and leukemia were blamed, as were the failure of zoos to follow breeding recommendations. Also alarming was the acknowledgement that “institutional knowledge” on the husbandry of this species was being lost. And Jack blamed the double-edged sword of the internet—while com-

munication using e-mail is instantaneous, it does not replace real phone calls and direct person-to-person dialog. Zookeepers are encouraged to pick up the phone and ask for advice.

I guess what struck me most profoundly during the entire Felid TAG was Jack's analysis of the reasons for animals in AZA zoos. No longer is there an attempt to justify animals with the SSP's as somehow going to save species from extinction. Instead, the four reasons cited by Jack as justification for zoos were:

1. To raise **awareness** about conservation needs and challenges
2. To **educate** the public about the animals that inhabit the earth
3. To **raise money** for use in habitat and species protection
4. To instill **pride** in our biological heritage

And I had to ask myself: What is the difference between what FCF members do and this AZA mandate? Aren't we all on the same team, performing the same duties? And do any of these reasons Jack cites require sub-species pure animals? Can't a generic tiger represent the species and the problems facing it just as well as one that has a pedigree that traces back to the wild? It seems to me that this acknowledgement of the role of zoos disproves assertions by vocal opponents of private ownership like Ron Tilson and others of his ilk, which are

Domestic  
Exotic  
Dogs  
Cats  
Snakes  
Birds  
Ferrets  
& more!

## **EIB Unleashes Animal Liability Line**

EIB provides animal liability coverage for dogs, cats, big cats and performing animals. If you have been denied first time coverage, or your homeowner's insurance does not cover your animals for liability, this protection is for you! 10% discount with the insured's proof of FCF accreditation.

- EIB can quote coverage for all breeds, and especially hard-to-place breeds.
- Exotic animals such as big cats, snakes, birds and ferrets are also considered for liability coverage.
- Animals used for business purposes like security and guard dogs, show dogs and other performing animals will be considered for coverage.

As a pet owner, give us a call today to learn how EIB can help you get the liability coverage you need.

**Learn more, today!**



**info@eibdirect.com | 877-678-7342**

often quoted by the media stating our “private sector captive populations are irrelevant to conservation.”

**Sumatran Tiger SSP** – inbreeding is very high in this species and no new founders have been located. Ron Tilson needs to move population forward as it is presently floundering. This population is also suffering from a very poor age pyramid, brought on by a 3-year moratorium on breeding while managers investigated suspicions that some Sumatran tigers were not pure. No public statement concerning this has ever been issued, and one can only wonder if it caused some tigers and their offspring to be permanently removed from the SSP breeding pool. Ron reported that the Tiger SSP Master Planning session would be held July 26.

**Ocelot SSP** – Ken Kaemmerer explained that this SSP is managed as two separate SSPs—the majority are generic ocelots having been bred in captivity for decades, many having originated from the private sector. There is also a smaller population of Brazilian ocelots that have been imported in the past decade in hopes of replacing the generic ocelot population with this chosen sub-species.

In the generic population there were 6.6 births and five deaths this past year. Of the births, five were the result of the SSP recommended breeding, and seven were not.

The Brazilian ocelot population consists of 12.7 individuals. There were two births,

totaling 2.2 and no deaths this past year. For the past two years attempts to import new Brazilian ocelots remain unfulfilled. BAMA, the Brazilian authority is not cooperating with the AZA SSP. Even more hopeless is the possibility of importing the embryos that were created in Brazil by Bill Swanson of the Cincinnati Zoo. It appears a change in the government of Brazil has brought with it a change in attitude towards cooperation with America, leaving the SSP for this species looking bleak at best.

Originally, the grand plan was to import up to ten pairs of unrelated wild caught ocelots for a nucleus-breeding program in the US. Also there were Brazilian embryos that could be imported and then implanted into the generic females in the US zoos. The long, long-term goal of this sub-species pure population was to someday return them to Brazil to restock the wild. In exchange for Brazil donating these ocelots to the SSP, the various zoos signed up to receive these wild caught founder cats pledged up to \$90,000 to fund conservation and education programs in Brazil.

The importation of endangered species is regulated by the CITES treaty and additionally by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Commercial trade in Appendix I animals is forbidden. Only bona fide breeding for conservation gains import permits. The US F&W Service interprets conservation breeding as actions that directly benefit the species in the wild. Therefore an isolated

breeding program that neglects to funnel money and good deeds to the populations in the wild will not gain F&W approval of an import permit, hence the SSP managers’ desire to fund conservation actions in the range counties where endangered species are removed.

To date, \$30,000 to \$40,000 has been sent to Brazil to fund various target projects, believed to benefit the species in that country. However, with the political logjam stopping any exporting to American zoos, the ocelot SSP is recommending that no more funds be sent south. And I could not help but notice the self-interest of the AZA conservation funding as the breakdown of the quid pro quo arrangement between the AZA and the government of Brazil causes the ocelot SSP to re-think their generosity and recommend ending their conservation funding of projects they once deemed worthy of their support.

**Fishing Cat SSP** - Linda Roberts of Riverbanks Zoo is the SSP studbook keeper for this species. The US population is 30.48 housed in 23 zoos, all descendants of 11 founder felines. There were 12 births in four litters, seven born at the Exotic Feline Breeding Center and five born at Minnesota Zoo. Eight deaths in the population were recorded this past year.

With the new AZA exclusivity mandate that SSP’s work only with AZA accredited facilities, and a major percentage of this species being owned by the Exotic Feline



Cheyenne Mountain Zoo



## 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 a 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!



Breeding Center in Rosamond, CA, much of the SSP meeting centered on how to address this potential loss of genetic material, since EFBC has to date expressed no interest in applying for AZA accreditation. It looks like AZA zoos may have to purchase animals they formerly enjoyed exhibiting through loans.

Interestingly, this species appears to suffer from a higher than normal degree of transition cell carcinoma, a form of bladder cancer. Bill Swanson is working on a theory that this species might need to be fed more fish in its captive diet. Considering all the positive benefits touted for the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oil and their antioxidant and possible cancer inhibiting properties, it does make one wonder why zoo managers are denying their fishing cats fish to eat, especially when zoos purchase a lot of fish for their aquatic mammal diets.

**Pallas Cat SSP** – Bill Swanson told us that the SSP population of 69 Pallas cats is housed in just 17 institutions, out of a possible 200 AZA zoos that could exhibit this species. And Cincinnati Zoo houses over a dozen of these cats. Lack of interest in exhibiting this slow moving, longhaired gray cat is frustrating SSP managers.

This species experiences a high mortality rate and of the nine births last year, only three survived. In addition to the six kittens that perished, another six adult cats died last year also. At least two deaths were attributed to toxoplasmosis, a parasitic organism that this species seems to have no natural exposure to in the wild, and therefore they have no acquired immunity. AZA Pallas cats have a 100% known pedigree, descendants of 24 founders, but it is plagued with health problems that complicate the process of insuring “survival” in captive AZA zoo situations.

**Clouded leopard SSP** – Nora Fletchall broke the bad news to the TAG attendees. Species managers could not be more concerned at the turn of events that unfolded this past year concerning their coveted clouded leopard population. The American studbook shows 82 animals, 38.48 held by 34 institutions. However, one of the largest owners of clouded leopards, Oakhill Center for Rare and Endangered Species is closing down their breeding facility and has sold and transferred their clouded leopard, cheetah and pallas cat populations to other facilities. In the case of the clouded leopard col-

lection of 28 felines, the sale was made to Tanganyika Wildlife Park, owned by Jim Fouts. This facility appears to have no interest in applying for AZA accreditation, and their ownership of so many of these felines would end the genetic stranglehold the AZA has enjoyed for the past two decades. Should this loss turn permanent, the SSP will be seriously hampered. Nora Fletchall, studbook keeper for this species will be contacting Tanganyika to negotiate the possible sale of these animals back to the AZA zoos.

This AZA clouded leopard population is deemed a “research population” an admission that due to massive inbreeding it cannot be honestly labeled a ‘survival plan’. Instead it is nothing more than an ongoing effort to keep the animals on exhibit at zoos and fill empty cage space. While acting as ambassadors to raise funds for conservation, these poor felines must also serve as research subjects, that is, living guinea pigs that are helping AZA zookeepers and researchers figure out why zoo owned clouded leopards have so many behavioral, reproductive, and medical problems,

---

**This AZA clouded leopard population is deemed a “research population” an admission that due to massive inbreeding it cannot be honestly labeled a ‘survival plan’.**

---

including unusual tumors and cancers.

Meanwhile, the arrival of four pairs of kittens from the cooperative captive breeding program in Thailand and another 2.2 wild caught individuals from Sir Lanka in 2006 brings promise that this species will continue to be exhibited in AZA zoos, even if the AZA zoos can’t manage to get them to breed.

It appears there is a greater emphasis upon figuring out how to accomplish artificial reproduction then to address this apparently shy species’ behavioral requirements necessary to accomplish natural conceptions.

**Snow Leopard SSP** – Dan Wornton – This species has one of the largest founder bases of all felines – with 35 founders, making management relatively easy. There

is a need to import new genetic material and SSP managers are looking at possible Pakistan imports of confiscated cats. All resources in that earthquake prone county are strained right now and they have approached US zoos about exporting some of their snows.

**Black-footed cat SSP** – few births this year and this species is also not doing well in the US or Europe. There are more black-footed cats being bred by the private sector in South Africa and the SSP managers are hoping to import more of these cats.

**Serval PMP** – This species is managed as a population management plan, rather than a species survival plan. Servals are well represented, being exhibited in 44 AZA zoos. A total of 145 individuals, mostly generic and whose pedigrees do not trace back to wild caught. Six servals were imported by facilities since January 2005.

**Cougar PMP** - There are 131 puma held by AZA zoos, of which 92 are older than ten years of age. This is clearly an aging population, having been held without any approved breeding for more than a decade. Recruitments to this PMP come mainly by way of placement of wild orphans. 11 such cubs were placed since 2005, six from South Dakota, four from Oregon and one out of Washington.

The three-day event was well worth my time. The tour of the Denver Zoo was worth the flight. I especially enjoyed the behind-the-scenes visit of the combined lion/wild dog/hyena exhibit and building complex that house these species at night. The cleanliness was amazing – not a speck of dirt, not a cobweb or an item out of place. Visiting this building gave me an intense desire to go home and clean my workstations

The exhaust systems were incredible, with fans and ducting throughout, some of the ducts were three feet in diameter! What was the most amazing thing to me was the price tag. Outdoor habitats complete with fake rocks and heavy Plexiglas walls, moats and a variety of grassy settings, and this central block building carried a \$27,000,000 price tag. It provided much less than an acre of habitat and housed about a dozen animals total.

I learned a lot and regret I missed the tour of Cheyenne Mountain Zoo and Big Cats of Serenity Springs that followed later Sunday afternoon. •

# Felid TAG—A Member's Experience

*As experienced by Amy Rasmussen*

This was my second Felid TAG (Taxon Advisory Group) meeting. I had attended a few years back when they held it in Dallas. I totally enjoy going!

One of the highlights for me this year was the presentation on the Amur leopard. A talk was given by an English woman, Sarah Christie from the Zoological Society of London. She is working with people from around the world to frantically try and save this cat. She showed us some spectacular photographs on a gigantic video screen of the Amur leopard in the wild. But it wasn't until we were touring the Denver Zoo and we walked up to the exhibit of two live Amur leopards that I was completely "blown away!" I had never seen any of these cats in real life up so close! I couldn't believe how very different they are from the African leopards that we see more in pictures, video, and live exhibits. I really want to call them giant snow leopards or golden snow leopards. They have this long, thick (soft and fluffy) coat. They are marked with big spots and rosettes that to me looked very similar to the snow leopard. Their tails are extremely long and fluffy like the snow leopard. But the Amur leopard is much larger than the snow leopard. The long fluffy tail seemed to go on forever. It took

my breath away and I just kept muttering to myself. This is one of the most beautiful cats I have ever seen! The Amur leopard is among the most rare of all the leopards and they live in the mountain forests of eastern Russia. I so hope that they can save them because this world would truly be a darker place without them!

I also was able to meet Ken Kramerer SSP Ocelot Chair, Dallas Zoo. He has assured me that he will help me start an ocelot education/conservation program here in Texas to promote the ocelot recovery effort. After I get going on that, I will add Playa De Oro to the information as well (with Tracy Wilson's approval of course.) I'm hoping Tracy, Leann, and others that

might be interested will come down here when they hold their meetings.

The hotel was nice, the food was good! Everyone looked a little tired—the AZA people overall seemed serious, not smiling very much. I guess they have a lot on their shoulders, keeping up with the care of their cats, collecting more cats, trying to help save the ones in the wild, and keeping the animal rights people at bay. It's almost as if we are always so intent on taking care of all the responsibilities and problems surrounding our cats we forget to stop and enjoy the "crown jewels" of the animal world that we love so much.

If you get a chance to attend next years Felid TAG, just do it, you won't regret it! •



**Paintings from your photos. Specializing in watercolor/pen and ink on illustration board. Contact artist regarding price quotes.**

**Cynthia Thanos-Wade  
Animal Portrait Artist  
Phone: 479-437-3628  
e-mail: ccthanos@voltage.net**



**Amur leopard**

# Observations of Felid TAG

*As experienced by Judy Berens*

I attended my first Felid TAG meeting the weekend of April 5-9. This year the Denver Zoo hosted it and for the most part the weather for our outing there was fantastic

I didn't arrive until the evening of the first day, having missed a meeting of interest to me, the ocelot SSP. Thursday morning I went to the clouded leopard SSP and found many topics of scientific interest and a lot of controversy.

I have five clouded leopards and am very interested in what is currently going on in the AZA and SSP. My cats are older being aged from 11 to 13 years so I am particularly concerned with geriatric problems. I learned that two likely causes of death for old cats were membranous glomerulopathy, a fatal kidney degenerative problem and pheochromocytoma, an adrenal gland problem. In a nutshell, tumors form in the adrenal gland, spread up the vena cava, enter the heart and eventually cause death. In the process, the cat experiences abnormally high blood pressure and often ocular problems, such as retinal detachment and blindness.

I was amazed! I have a cat with those very symptoms. He is 12 years-old and has been under the care of an ophthalmologist. In fact, she was scheduled to meet me the day of my return to rescope his eyes, check his blood pressure (as well as you can when he is only partially out) and take digital X-rays of his chest and abdomen. He is currently on 5 mg Norvasc am and pm, but his blood pressure is still averaging 210 over 120, incredibly high. Fortunately the X-rays were normal and his retinas are 70% re-attached. After a consult with a cardiologist, 5 mg Atenolol will be added to the Norvasc. There will be a recheck in 30 days and an abdominal ultrasound will be scheduled. Dr. Karen Terio, a DVM and pathologist at the University of Illinois is going to evaluate blood and urine samples from my cat to track the results with those of other clouded leopards.

Another interesting topic mentioned at the meeting was how to deal with aggressive males—especially when introducing cats to a potential new mate. Dusty Lombardi, National Zoo, suggested the use of Deslorin, a contraceptive that has worked well with aggressive otters and sea lions. Susan Asa at the St. Louis Zoo has all the information on the use of this product.

And now for the controversy—it seems

that all of the Oakhill clouded leopards (many that are in zoos) are now owned by a "private" individual. The zoological community must now decide if they should try to purchase these cats. If not, they may be taken back by the owner and sold to anyone with appropriate permits. There are some heated emotions concerning this dilemma and it will be interesting to see how it plays out. •



Clouded leopard

## ANIMAL FINDERS GUIDE

18 issues a year for only \$30.00

Single issue \$2.50



Informative articles on exotic animal husbandry. Exotic animals, products, services, auctions and shows advertised.

PO Box 99, Prairie Creek, IN 47869

812-898-2678 or Fax 812-898-2013

visit our website at [www.animalfindersguide.com](http://www.animalfindersguide.com)

e-mail: [animalfinder@thnet.com](mailto:animalfinder@thnet.com)

## Select Presentations from the Felid TAG

Compiled by Carol Bohning

### Amur Leopards and Tigers: Wild Status and Prospects

Dale Miquelle

*Wildlife Conservation Society*

The range of the Siberian tiger has shrunk to a very small region along the coast in the Russian far east adjacent to the Chinese border. Most of the tigers are in Russia with just a few animals in China. A winter survey in 2005 may have found a slight increase in the numbers (est. 431 to 529) but this may be due to an increased number of observers in the field. Some expansion of the range seems to be occurring to the north and some into China. Threats to the tigers consist primarily of habitat loss, an inadequate prey base, and human-caused mortality due to hunting,

competition for prey, retaliation, and perceived/real danger to humans.

The Amur leopard is suffering from a classical fragmentation-isolation-extinction process. There is one population left in the wild, within the range of the Siberian tiger. A 2003 survey estimated 28-30 leopards were left in the wild. It was found that the best indicator of leopard presence was elevation. Lower elevations were human-dominated, while higher elevations were inhabited by tigers. Threats include human settlements which completely surround the remaining population, habitat conversion from mixed coniferous to steppe grasslands due to fires caused by humans, competition and mortality from tigers, and extreme inbreeding.

The Chinese government has recently established a protected habitat along the border adjacent to the existing range of the tigers and leopards. So far thousands of snares have been removed and officials are attempting to work with hunters. It is thought that there is a high turnover rate and possible low survival rate in the tiger populations, but that the individuals themselves are fairly healthy with regards to genetic problems. One possible major problem that has not been considered is that of the effect of disease on wild animals. Interaction with diseased domestic animals could easily wipe out remaining populations of the tigers and leopards. There is a great need for a disease risk assessment, and to include veterinarians in the Russian



Pallas' cat at Denver Zoo

Lynn Culver



far east to work with local villagers to vaccinate domestics against such diseases as canine distemper.

There are limited opportunities for re-introductions of amur leopards. Areas of good habitat are either dominated by humans or tigers. In addition, there are no wild source populations to use, and captive animals would need to be conditioned to avoid both tigers and humans. Funding for such programs is currently not in place. In North America, research funding comes from the private sector at 4.2%, the AZA at 4.2%, and the World Wildlife Fund at 5.2%. The AZA was urged to make their captive breeding program global.

### **Amur Leopards and Tiger EEP's: Management Strategies and Conservation Support Links**

*Sarah Christie*

*Zoological Society of London*

The 2005 population status for the Amur tiger in European and Russian zoos is a total of 120.145 (male:female) individuals from 65 founding members. While very little inbreeding is present, a big problem is that some zoos are refusing to lend out their tigers for recommended breedings. Management issues faced include: 1. keeping the population stable. 2. The attempt by Russian zoos to separate into their own breeding management program because the Russians want to keep the amur tiger lineage absolutely pure. 3. Working on a process for handling wild cubs coming into the European program. At present, only orphaned cubs are being imported, no adult cats. 4. Problems with poor husbandry and breeding management, the willingness to sell cats out of the program, and resentment of interference from Moscow. More information is available on the website: [www.21stCenturyTiger.org](http://www.21stCenturyTiger.org).

With regards to the Amur leopard, there are currently over 100 individuals from 13 founders in 42 institutions. It took a very long six years to sort out good young pairs for breeding recommendations and to get them established. At some point, it was discovered that Founder '2' was not of purebred stock. Russian and some European zoos are very opposed to breeding any indi-

viduals with that founder's progeny, and that '2' genes should be reduced within the captive population. It was also found that those with '2' genes have a big difference with pure stock with regards to birth seasonality.

Another problem within the captive population is melanism which has not been recorded in the wild population. It is caused by a recessive gene. There are currently six black cats in the captive population, and nine individuals that carriers of the gene. Finally, purebred stock has been found to have problems with leg bone deformities, heart defects, cryptorchidism, and a short-tail gene. In the non-pure breeding stock, two individuals have the short-tail gene including one that also has cryptorchidism.

The amur leopard is the only wild cat in the world for which re-introduction from zoo stock has been identified as necessary for conservation action. Current captive breeding strategies are to out-breed all remaining purebred stock (which the Russians are very opposed to) to reduce congenital deformities and to recommend no breeding of animals with the short-tail gene. There are now reasonable numbers of pairs producing leopards with 20% or less of Founder 2 genes. These animals will be the basis of the future breeding program. For more information, please visit [www.amur-leopard.org](http://www.amur-leopard.org), and use the user name: `alcp_user` and the password: `p4rdus`. Contributors are listed on the website. There is also a new project, Leopards and Wildlife Health, which is considered essential for re-introduction efforts.

### **Snow Leopards: the Study and Conservation of a Highly Cryptic Asian Felid**

*Tom McCarthy*

*International Snow Leopard Trust*

Snow leopards are extremely difficult to study in the wild. They occur in 12 to 13 countries in over 12 million square kilometers. It is estimated that there are as many cougars currently in Colorado as there are snow leopards in the 12 million km range. Their habitat is located at elevations between 4,000 and 17,000 feet and is rocky, rugged, remote, and bleak. In addition, their

coat pattern gives them very good camouflage.

Threats to their survival include retribution killing, loss of prey species, and poaching. The local people are very poor and depend on livestock and herding for their survival. Legal and illegal hunting and livestock encroachment have reduced the numbers of mountain sheep and goats on which the snow leopards depend. Snow leopard skins and bones (which can fetch between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for a complete set) are a great temptation to people whose annual income is \$25 per year.

The Snow Leopard Trust has been around for 25 years and has five field offices. Working with the people and respecting their culture, the SLT tries to balance the needs of the people and the cats. In the past, the people have had no outside income. This is beginning to change with the creation of Snow Leopard Enterprises. Wool and other products are now available to purchase through the web. Annual income for those communities which agree to not kill the snow leopards and enter a conservation agreement with SLE have risen to around \$70 per year. It has also empowered the women of these communities through crafts and products which they sell, and in many cases, the women are now the main income earner for their families.

The SLT through the SLE program are also working to reduce disease in the livestock herds. It has been found that 30% to 40% of livestock loss is attributed to disease rather than snow leopard predation as was believed. The SLE has also created an insurance program that covers loss due to snow leopards.

Have these programs helped the snows? Monitoring techniques do not allow the tallying of numbers of cats out there except through sign of presence such as scrapes, urine and scat on scrapes, scent sprays, and face scent markings. Researchers and locals now walk one mile line transects to look for such marks. Newer study methods have also been introduced such as DNA genetic fingerprinting of feces and hair, camera trapping, and radio-trapping with GPS technology. Camera trapping has been difficult in the minus 35 – 40°F temperature range

and bears have been attracted to cameras with plastic housing and destroyed the cameras. For more information on SLE and how you can help, visit the web site: [www.snowleopard.org](http://www.snowleopard.org).

### **To Define a Species: the Mongolian Pallas' Cat**

*Bill Swanson*

*Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden*

Currently what is known about Pallas' Cat reproduction has come from our captive population, i.e. a pronounced seasonality for estrus, and that it is photo-dependent. Manipulation of the photoperiod with artificial light is required to bring captive females into estrus. The female will breed the first season following birth, but seems to not breed after eight years of age. In-vitro fertilization works using frozen semen. The cats are highly susceptible to FHV-1 (feline herpes virus), but it has been found not to be shed in semen. The Pallas' cat is also highly susceptible to toxoplasmosis.

In-situ studies are greatly needed to determine numbers in the wild, what threats

are faced and to understand the evolutionary basis for management problems faced in captivity, for example, toxoplasmosis infection in the captive population. Toxo has not been found historically in wild populations and therefore, no natural immunity developed. Current known threats include birds of prey, sheep herder's dogs, and disease concerns (FIV, FHV, rabies, toxo). Establishment of in-situ and ex-situ links, including for gene flow, are also necessary. Funding for these studies is needed.

Pallas' cat habitat is steppe grasslands with temperatures reaching to -40°C in the winter. Field studies are planned to be conducted from 2005 to 2008 using radio-telemetry. So far nine cats have been collared. Capture of female cats has been found to easier than with the males. The females when found will flatten themselves down onto the ground and attempt to become invisible. They can be walked up to and captured. The males, however, will run and need to be chased. When caught, blood samples are collected along with skin biopsies for DNA analysis. Males are given

reproduction exams and semen is collected. The semen is frozen using liquid nitrogen and brought back to the US.

Fertilization rates are approximately 60% using frozen semen. Dr. Swanson uses laparoscopic oocyte recovery and in-vitro fertilization. The small population in captivity has experienced decreasing genetic diversity due to genetic drift. To counter this, recommendations include increasing the population size, prolonging the generation interval and introducing new founders. More zoos are encouraged to keep these cats. It was also mentioned that the Iams Company is involved with nutrition studies.

### **Rodenticide Use and Secondary Poisoning Risks to Non-Target Wildlife in Central Mongolia**

*Ann Winters, Michigan State University*

Central Mongolia is a mixture of pastureland and arid desert. The people are nomadic herders and due to lack of knowledge of pasture management, have allowed areas to become over-grazed. Over-grazed areas are ideal habitat for the Brand's vole



**Cheetah at Denver Zoo**

Lynn Culver

which once established leads to further pasture degradation.

In order to control the vole populations, a second generation anti-coagulant poison, bromadiolone has been applied both by aerial spraying and ground application. Unfortunately, this chemical has been found to cause 1° poisoning of over 350 non-target bird species (including cranes) and was suspected of causing 2° poisoning of scavengers and predators. A study was conducted to determine whether toxic levels of bromadiolone were present in carcasses and live voles. Also, were carcasses available to scavengers above ground and what species were scavenging the carcasses?

Toxic levels were found in live voles and carcasses. In carcasses analyzed, concentration of the poison was approximately four times greater in the liver than in live voles, and approximately eight times greater when the whole body was analyzed. The study found an average of 260 carcasses per hectare available above ground. By 36 to 94 hours most of them were scavenged by beetles, although ten other species were identified as scavengers including owls, fox, and hedgehogs. Bromadiolone can persist in fatty tissues for 170 days or more.

Greater dosages of bromadiolone than were recommended were found to be common. In many cases, the baits were not measured and were hand mixed with shovels. Results of the study definitely showed increased poisoning risk with increased application dosages. Aerial spraying has been banned since 2004, but better management of ground applications and better pasture management is a necessity.

### **Ecology and Conservation of Pallas' Cats and Other Sympatric Small Carnivores in the Northern Gobi, Mongolia**

*By Richard Reading, Denver Zoo*

Carnivores involved in the study included the corsac fox, red fox, Pallas' cat and European badger. Threats to these animals are over-hunting, poaching, live trade of carnivores, rodent poisoning, lack of protection, and little scientific knowledge of their habits. The study investigated the use of space by these carnivores; prey use, diets and abundances; and the magnitude of hunting and poaching threats.

Habitats included desert steppe, rocky outcrops, and sandy drainages. Fox, bad-

gers, and Pallas' cats were live trapped and in some cases the cats were dug from dens. Monitoring was done with radio collars. Hair, blood, and ticks were collected and the animals ear-tagged. Prey species were collected and counted using box traps for small mammals (gerbils, voles, etc.), transects for lizards and pitfall traps for insects.

It was found that mammal species were most abundant in the autumn and that when mammal availability was low, use of lizards increased. Winter prey species were insects and carnivores would dig for them in the ground around den sites. A huge mortality rate occurred with collared animals, except for badgers which hibernate during the winter. 67% mortality occurred by humans, 5.6% by predation, and 28% by unknown causes. Human-caused mortality came from a local practice of coming across an animal trail in the snow, following it on motorcycles and then building a fire on top of the den to smoke the animal out. The animal is then killed.

Unfortunately, the Chinese are proving to be an irresistible market for the poor Mongolian people and pay good money for animal parts. Skins are bought by the Chinese at \$12 for a Corsac fox, \$7 for a red

fox and \$100 for a Pallas' cat. It is estimated that millions of skins are going to China. A park ranger program has been initiated which pays \$50 per month to keep the ranger honest. Current law dictates that while it is illegal to shoot a carnivore, it is not illegal to possess skins or sell them or other body parts. This serves to tie the hands of any law enforcement effort. Eurasian lynx there are also victims of this trade. More information can be found on the web site [www.wildcru.org/links/Mongolia](http://www.wildcru.org/links/Mongolia).

### **TAG Working Group – Small Cats**

Recommendations for the Regional Collection Plans (RCP) will remain mostly the same for the small cat species. Sand cats, ocelots, fishing cats, Pallas' cats, and black-footed cats will remain SSP (Species Survival Plan) species. A discussion on the status of servals and caracals between PMP (Population Management Plan) or NM (Non-management) resulted in a PMP status. Canada lynx will also be a PMP species. Although there are 120 bobcats in North American zoos, and the subject was debated quite a bit, bobcats will be a NM species. •



**Lion at Denver Zoo**

Lynn Culver

# Comparison: Two Public Zoos and a Private Sanctuary in Colorado

By Carol Bohning

While out in Denver for the Felid Tag meeting, there were three of us who would not fly out until the day after the conference (due to airline ticket prices!) and another fine fellow, Mr. JB Anderson, who drove. I was invited to ride along on a trip to the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs and to the Big Cats of Serenity Springs sanctuary about 20 miles to the east. Kevin Chambers, Judy Berens, JB, and I had already toured the Denver Zoo together for the conference and here was a chance to have even more fun.

I think we were all fairly impressed with the Denver Zoo where we were hosted to a dinner and silent auction on the last night of the Felid TAG meeting. We were also given a couple of hours of behind the scenes tours. Some of us FCF folks also toured Predator Ridge and the veterinary hospital.

Predator Ridge is an example of what zoos nationwide are trying to achieve—larger, more naturalistic, and educational exhibits. Habitats will be home to 14 African species of mammals, birds, and reptiles totaling 50 animals including lions, spotted hyenas, African wild dogs, crowned cranes, African porcupines, banded mongoose, vulturine guineafowl, and more. Within Predator Ridge, one of the three exhibit spaces is home to two prides of lions. Predator Ridge features 10-foot tall mounds for lions to survey their surroundings, electric hot rocks for warmth and a separate maternity den for mothers and future cubs. The exhibit offers several animal enrichment opportunities, including the ability to rotate hyenas, wild dogs, and lions to different exhibits where their sense of smell will be delighted by the previous inhabitants' odors. There is inside space for three carnivores and an extensive system of tunnel cages and radio communications allow the shifting of the animals. Very high tech! Other indoor and outdoor habitats are home to Siberian tigers, jaguars, cheetahs, clouded leopards, Amur leopards and snow leopards. You can find more information about the zoo at [www.denverzoo.org](http://www.denverzoo.org).

The veterinary hospital was quite impressive and we were given a great tour

by one of the veterinarians on staff, Dr. Felicia Knightly. Young and enthusiastic, Dr. Knightly was frank about her work and answered the barrage of questions put to her by the FCFers. As a result, we got to see just about everything and learned how some of the equipment was used on various animals. We ended up finally leaving but not without arguing as to who gets her if she ever leaves the zoo staff!

Driving to the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, we passed through some very affluent areas of Colorado Springs. We drove up a portion of Cheyenne Mountain to the parking lot from which there was quite a view over the surrounding flat land. The parking lot sits at an elevation of about 6800 feet above sea level. From the parking lot to the highest exhibit in the zoo, Asian Highlands, you must climb another 120'! Just inside the entrance is a very large exhibit of reticulated giraffes with feed stations where you can feed them. That exhibit was difficult to leave but we worked our way around to all the cats such as the Amur tigers, Amur leopards and Pallas' cats. We saw the old cat exhibit houses and felt very sad about the cats that were housed there. The cages were very small and were floored with concrete. The newer cat exhibits, however, were very nice and very well landscaped. In between exhibits, it was impossible not to

look out at the landscape in the distance. To visit on-line, go to [www.cmzoo.org](http://www.cmzoo.org).

Opened in 1992, Big Cats of Serenity Springs is home to well over 105 big cats, including lions, tigers, ligers, cougars, leopards, lynx, bobcat, and servals. They are the largest state and federally licensed placement facility in Colorado, located east of Colorado Springs. Owners, Karen and Nick Sculac, are proud that theirs is the only facility in the entire state—including government funded zoological parks—to have qualified for, and be granted, a state of Colorado Zoological License. They showed us great hospitality and gave a wonderful tour.

It is definitely a labor of love and the caring attitude of the owners is reflected in the happy chuffs and other calls given to us by cats that came to the edge of their cages to greet us. It seemed they were truly delighted to have visitors instead of looking at us with fear or aggression. All of their surroundings were spotless. We had such a good time talking with the residents and the hosts that Karen and Nick were obliged to tell us that they had a prior engagement. If they hadn't, we might not have left! But before we pulled out of the gate, they had loaded us down with t-shirts, CDs of cat talkings (that we will have for sale at the convention) and even cuttings from some of their trees. •



Carol Bohning

Kevin talks with the owners of Big Cats of Serenity Springs

# Blast from the Past. . . .Saga of "Red"

**Asian Golden Cat and his friend, Duke, a "dirty hound"  
Long Island Ocelot Club Newsletter  
July/August 1970—Volume 14, Issue 4**

By Will Tracy, Portland, Oregon

I'm sorry that we do not have any cute little stories about love affairs with ocelots. In fact, the hero of this piece is not at all a cat, but of all things, a *dog*, and worse, a dirty hound.

Duke, a blue tick hound was purchased with Joe, a red bone hound. They were supposed to be great cat dogs, but our concern was something that would chase off the coyotes that were killing all of our birds. The first day I had the dogs, Duke hit the trail of a "bobcat" and treed him, howling his head off until I came to rescue Fat Cat, our prize Manx.

Then they seemed satisfied to settle down to keeping other dogs off the place. I had almost forgotten about their duties until, coming back from a movie one Saturday night, I noticed something wrong. When we went into our house, Red, our beautiful Asian golden cat was not growling at us from his perch. The door to the spare room was open and the window outside admitted a cold wind into the house. Red was gone.


A quick check found the ducks scattered about a thousand feet from the pond and our Muscovy had a bloody spot on her back, but otherwise she was all right. I quickly grabbed the hounds and tied them hoping they had not chased off our golden cat. How the window and door got open is

unknown.

Since Red would begin to do his snooping around 4 am each morning, I was awake at that time and went out with a flashlight to see if he would show up. I called him by sharpening a knife on the steel, which is his sign that food is being prepared. When the light was shown their way, the beautiful blue green eyes of Red showed like two fires. Quickly we placed some meat in the Have-a-heart trap and set it by the cages. There was nothing to do until morning.

I awakened early and seeing the trap had been sprung. I rushed down to find it empty. Red has long arms and apparently had reached in and taken the food and then escaped with no problem.

I did not know how the hounds would react to Red, but I figured it was better then having a lost golden cat. I untied the dogs and took them to the bird cages. Duke was first to take interest and began sniffing around. Joe, the older hound, took off into the woods. I followed him for some time but since he made no sound, he soon had gone his way. Duke, being faithful, came with me and I turned him loose. Duke headed back to the bird cages and within five minutes I could hear his bay, a thousand or so feet from the house. He seemed to run the length of the property. I took to his trail and found him baying at a bush. (This is not exactly right—the "bush" covers over an acre of land and is covered with stickers.) Duke showed no interest

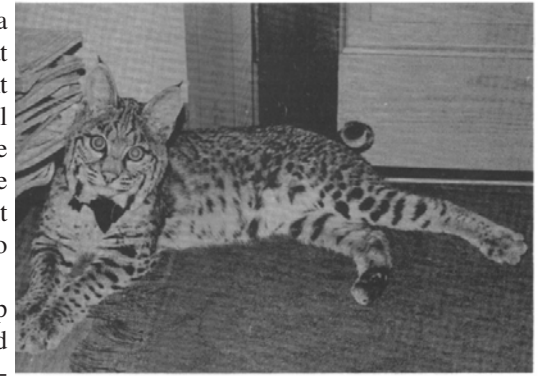


**NEWSLETTER**

STAFF:  
Mrs. Harry Cisin, Editor, Amagasset, N. Y. 11830 (516 267 3852)  
Mrs. Daniel Treanor, Secretary (Hostess), 1454 Fleetwood Drive E.,  
Mobile, Alabama 36605  
Dr. Michael P. Balbo, Art/Conservation, 21-01 46 Street  
Long Island City, N. Y. 11105  
Wm. Engler, Fieldology, General Delivery, Springdale,  
Utah 84707 (801-772-5909)  
Robert Peramor, Historian, 250 Willow Avenue, Somerville, Mass.  
(617-443-0700)

Long Island Ocelot Club      Volume 14, Number 4  
Amagasset, N. Y. 11830      July/August, 1970  
© July, 1970

**LONG ISLAND OCELOT CLUB**



IS FUDGE, YOUNG LYNX BUFLUS WHO LIVES WITH MR. JACKSON CHICK AND FAMILY IN SOMERSWORTH HAMPSHIRE.  
THEIR STORY, "BOBCATS ARE BEAUTIFUL" -- ON PAGE 5 OF THIS NEWSLETTER.

in wanting to go in, but being a cat lover, I picked him up and tossed him over a hedge into a clearing about five feet away. He was off and baying. I followed after him on the outside of the bushes and saw him streak out in hot pursuit on the other side.

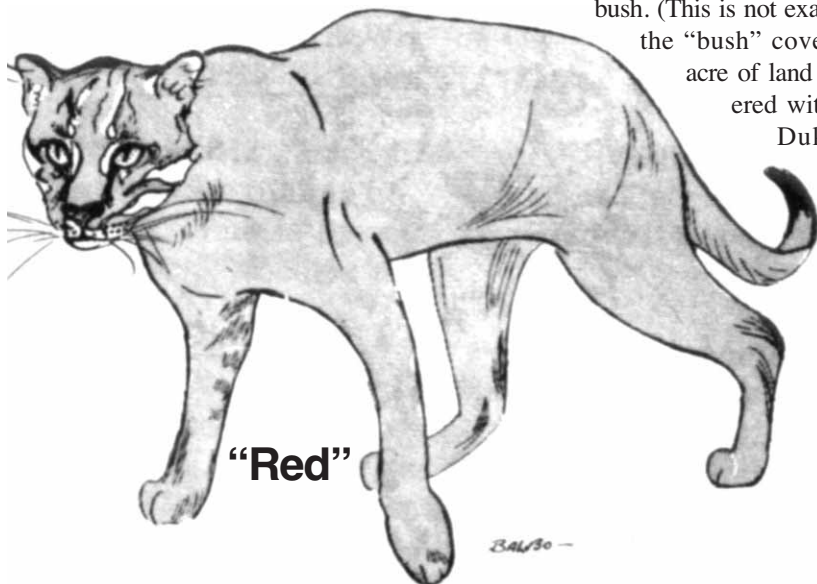
By the time I got there, he was walking along with Red, side-by-side. Red did not seem to mind him at all; this is typical of the cats we have had. They seem to love animals, but not necessarily humans. Red ran under a log and I grabbed him by his long tail. Mary Ellen, my wife, gave me her coat and I wrapped it around Red so I could carry him up the steep hill to the house.

Red was tired, frightened, and a bit angry with me but otherwise quite happy to be home. His new mate arrived several days later, so now we look for-ward to little "Reds" this summer.

And what of the hounds?

Duke? He hasn't gotten over the hero's attention he has been getting since then. Joe? Well, that's another story. I suspect we may have some Joyotes someplace out there. But in looking for Joe we came across another cat about which we will write when and if she is captured.

(Ed: Mary Ellen and Will were directors of the Pacific Northwest Branch of LIOC)



Balbo -

# Trip to Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, Belize

By Carol Bohning

For Christmas 2005, I was incredibly surprised by my husband and given the best present ever—a trip to Belize! Not just to Belize, but to the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary! To those of you who have read Alan Rabinowitz' book, *Jaguar*, you know what I'm talking about!

The Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS) was created by the Belizean government in 1986 after studies conducted in the field by Dr. Alan Rabinowitz proved that there was a considerable population of jaguars remaining in the wild and the Cockscomb Basin area was very good habitat for them. The sanctuary encompasses 128,000 acres. In addition to protection of the jaguar, the CBWS is home to four other endangered cats (puma, ocelot, margay, and jaguarundi), reintroduced Baird's tapir, black howler monkeys, and over 290 species of birds.

It was to be a short trip, as Craig reasoned that we had never been to the rainforest and did not have a clue as to what we were getting into. We left Saturday, February 18 on a morning flight and about 5.5 flight hours and a stop-over in Houston, we arrived at Belize City. We rented a car and opted for a drive of about 3.5 hours as opposed to getting on another plane and hopping down the coast. We got to see a very beautiful country and talk to very friendly Belizeans as a reward! We arrived at the CBWS headquarters just before dark after traversing a six-mile long dirt road into the jungle. By the time we were installed in one of their cabins, we were too tired from traveling to do more than eat and go to bed. Over dinner, however, in nearby Maya Center, we were able to hook up with Ernesto Saqui, a local man who had been director of the sanctuary for many years. He had offered to be our guide for two half-day hikes the next two days.

Besides cats, another passion of mine is bird watching. I am one of those people who keep a life list and count of the birds I see. We were awakened at dawn the next morning, Sunday, with some of the most beautiful bird songs I had ever heard. We dressed and went out immediately and took our first hike on the Tiger Fern Trail which featured two waterfalls. It started out in



**Ernesto Saqui, Carol and Craig in Cockscomb**

lowland forest habitat and climbed steadily up into slope forest habitat. We found several leaf cutter ant trails and the track of a puma. Finally about two miles in, which seemed like straight up to me, we paused and looked out over some of the landscape before continuing the trail (now lined with tiger ferns) down the back side of the ridge. Here the footing became more precarious but as we inched our way downhill, we came to the first of the waterfalls. It was so isolated that one of us took off their clothes and went swimming in the pool at the base of the falls. It was quite cool and refreshing! Across the stream was the beginning of the remainder of the trail to the second waterfall. This trail was indeed straight up! We decided to pass so that we had time to return to the camp to meet up with Ernesto.

That afternoon, we walked the Victoria Peak and Wari Loop trails. We saw a rare Morelet's crocodile in a South Stann Creek swamp, jaguar scratches on a tree and a jaguar scrape on the ground, a hole in the ground along the path that was home to a tarantula, cohune palm nuts, the beloved food of white-lipped peccaries, and a tapir trail between two water bodies and a nice big tapir track. We also saw or heard the calls of over 40 different bird species, including the red-throated ant tanager,

white-collared manakin, boat-billed heron, great and little tinamous and a keel-billed toucan. After our 3.5 hour morning hike and five hour afternoon hike with Ernesto, we had hoped to have the energy to take a night hike with our flashlights when most of the cat sightings occur, but we had absolutely no energy and after a couple of drinks of some native rum purchased from one of the Maya village folks, we blew off dinner and went to bed.

Sometime around 4:00 a.m. Monday morning, we were abruptly wakened by the most haunting bird calls. It seemed like the forest was alive with what we later learned were barred ant-shrikes. They were all around us. It was awesome! Ernesto met us for an early start, and before we even left camp, we had spotted a gray fox and a flock of plain chachalacas. These large arboreal birds hang out in flocks of 10 to 15 and around an hour after sunrise sound a very raucous alarm. It is very interesting to see these big birds up in the tree branches where they safely spend the night. During the day, they stay in brushy, secondary growth areas.

Ernesto took us on the Victoria Peak, Antelope, Gibnut Loop trails, about a nine-mile trek through lowland forest habitat with several stream crossings. In between

birds, Ernesto told us about Mayan beliefs that related to the local trees and pointed out termite nests, orchid and bromeliad species, and cichlid fish species in a stream. Towards the middle of the afternoon, Ernesto spotted a mottled owl with a silky anteater in its talons. I saw no details, just a big bird flying away. Ernesto was amazed, never having seen anything like this before. Once back on the Victoria Peak path heading towards camp, we ran across some college students from the states who had taken a three day trip to Victoria Peak, the second highest mountain in Belize at 1120 meters. Along the way, they had seen a troop of the reintroduced Yucatan black howler monkeys and a flock of scarlet macaws, now an extremely rare sight. Right after the reintroduction began in 1992 when 62 monkeys were released over three years, the troops would stay around the camp headquarters and sightings were frequent. However as more time passed, the troops moved out into the surrounding forest areas.

That evening after dark, Craig and I decided to do our night walk. We had not thought to hire a guide to take us, although the few other visitors and the night managers seemed to think it was a good idea. We had read about some of the creatures we could see and were somewhat apprehensive but decided 'no guts, no glory.' We grabbed our flashlights and off we went. We got miles from the camp when Craig's flashlight died. From then on we had my little mini Maglite! Oh boy! We did get to see hundreds of glowing spider eyes along the trail, and I spotted a red brocket deer in some underbrush, but no cat sightings at all. On our way out on the trail, we spoke to three students who had seen a puma and on the way back we met up with two guys who

had followed a margay down the path for about 25 yards. Had we seen it? Of course not!

We did have one big highlight in store for us that night, however. Back at camp, we were telling one of the managers about our cat sanctuary (everyone thought we were nuts!) when he said he wanted to show us his new 'pet.' We walked over to a small tree onto which had been stuck a couple of oranges. Once we got there, a little kinkajou came down out of an adjacent tree and walked over to us. We squatted down and he walked up to me and put his hand on my knee and sniffed my jeans and hand. He then got down and did the same thing to Craig. He was so beautiful looking up at us with his big nocturnal eyes! He checked us out and then walked back over to his tree and climbed back up into it. It was a great encounter!

Tuesday morning Craig and I took an early morning hike on the Tinamou trail and visited the plane wreck site where Dr. Rabinowitz, one helper, and the pilot crashed into the forest during a sudden thunderstorm. They had been out trying to radio-locate a collared jaguar when a wind shear affected the landing of the plane. After the crash, the plane was left where it fell and a path was built off the access road to the site. We stopped at the Maya Center women's craft mall on the way out of the sanctuary. There we purchased several things made by the local Maya people that are sold to support their families now that they no longer practice slash and burn agriculture in the forest. One of these items might just show up at the FCF auction in July, you never know! It was certainly a great trip and there is so much to see if you are a nature lover. We can't wait to go back!



Craig and Ernesto on trail

## You Can Visit the Cheetah!

You too can visit the Savannah Cheetah Foundation, home of over a dozen tame cheetah. There are two ways to spend a week—or longer—at the Savannah.

- As a guest. In other words, as a typical tourist. (\$300 per person per day all-inclusive)
- As a working assistant (intern/volunteer). (\$75 per person per day)

### **Tourist:**

Picked up at airport and transferred to the Savannah. Accommodations in luxury tents mounted on decks overlooking a water hole, complete with en-suite bathrooms, three sumptuous meals a day, early morning and late afternoon game drives in the Land Rover, afternoon guided walks, if requested, watch/help with the afternoon feed of the cheetah, relax next to the swimming pool, work out on spinning bikes or tread mills, cruise down the five miles of the Vaal River, along the southern border of the preserve in a rubber dinghy, play on the internet in the computer room.

After breakfast any one of the following can be done for a small fee: The Apartheid Museum, casinos, golf courses, Vredfort Dome, a World Heritage meteorite impact site, curio manufacturing and selling, and more!

### **Intern/volunteer:**

Collected and returned to airport, accommodated in thatch rondawels in the guest compound (round traditional African huts) with full en-suite bathrooms.

Duties: days start at 7:00am, cheetahs need to be checked, fed, areas cleaned, water replenished, etc.

The cheetah project is multi faceted and the Savannah is desperate for help in any of the following areas:

Communication: articles written for publication, newsletters to Friends of Savannah, web site development and updating, liaison with the SA version of USFW. Education: Lecture-(talk) to locals and school groups about cats in general and cheetah specifically-and how we can all live together. Research: Assess other attempts at re-introduction of carnivores-there is tons of literature that needs to be considered, contact other institutions that have done similar projects (White Oaks and their panther project), evaluate the quantity of natural prey in the proposed release area, monitoring and recording.

*For bookings at the Savannah please contact:*

*Ellen Dumm*

*ellendumm@comcast.net*

*303-810-4370*

# Private cheetah breeding program too successful? Rather than placed in zoos, cheetahs to be reintroduced to the wild

*Bobby Hartsliel*

What do you do with 16 baby cheetah whose ages range between three months and 18 months?

Five years ago when the people at the Savannah Cheetah Foundation (SCF) embarked on a captive cheetah breeding project, no one could have predicted that finding suitable homes for these cats in 2006 would pose any problem. After all, these big cats that used to roam the globe are now an endangered species in grave danger of extinction, with only an estimated 2,500 remaining in the wild.

The SCF is located on a 3,000 acre preserve in the Free State province (state), about an hour's drive south of Johannesburg, South Africa. Twelve years ago, Renee and Bobby Hartsliel decided to leave the big city lights behind them, and with their nine-month-old son, relocated to the savannah where they began establishing an educational game preserve on what was previously a dairy farm.

While Bobby systematically started the process of reintroducing indigenous animals back on to the land, Renee established a Montessori preschool for the pre-kindergarten children in the area. Today, there are 38 different species of free running African

animals on the preserve. Every year, six to ten groups of people of various ages (mostly from the USA), visit the Savannah to participate in experience-centered seminars. The emphasis is on experiencing what you learn. The possible curriculums are vast and varied, and range from geology to biology, astronomy to entomology.

In 2001, there was an apparent lack of diversity in the gene pool of captive held cheetah, especially among the cheetahs in the USA. The SCF decided to embark on a project to address this situation and by so doing, make a meaningful contribution to the continued survival of this endangered species. At the same time, this project would provide an opportunity for groups visiting the savannah to enhance their learning experience and ensure that hundreds of people annually were educated about the plight of the cheetah.

So began the journey to breed cheetah in captivity at the Savannah. Conventional wisdom for years had dictated that to successfully breed cheetah in captivity breeders required at least 35 females. The management of the SCF decided to depart from this conventional wisdom and concentrate their efforts on small breeding groups consisting of two males and three females.

Progress was slow and painful. The learning curve was steep and with very little data available, SCF project manager Pieter Kemp and his team had to effectively reinvent the wheel, so to speak. Many hours were spent and many miles were traveled in trying to succeed where so many others had failed. The perseverance and dedication of Pieter's team finally paid off in 2005, when sixteen healthy cheetah cubs were born in three litters and began to thrive.

The secret of their success?

According to Pieter "Love, good food, and a healthy mother. No matter what the species, healthy mothers tend to produce healthy babies"

In late 2005, the search for suitable homes began for these cubs. Initial indications were enormously positive. Many institutions in United States sought cheetah, especially cheetah that would bring a new bloodline into the country. There was (and is) interest from a wide variety of organizations, ranging from large public zoos, to small private zoos, and individuals. However, cheetahs are listed by CITES as an endangered species and their movement, quite rightly so, is strictly controlled. That means that for any of these cubs to find a new home in the United States, an import permit is first required from the USFWS. This is a lengthy process, and there is no guarantee that any application, once reviewed, will be successful.

Of course the USA is not the only place in the world that has an interest in obtaining cheetah. The SCF team sweated, literally, for four years to bring these cubs into the world with the intention of contributing to the longevity of the species. There are many wealthy hunters (particularly in the Middle East) that would pay exorbitant fees to hunt the cheetah, but that option was never even considered.

So the question facing the SCF earlier this year was "What do we do now?"

Following that sappy line in Eric Siegel's book *Love Story*, "If you love them, set them free," the SCF team decided to embark on an ambitious project to reintroduce captive bred cheetah into the wild.

*"Ah, but that cannot be done..."*





*"It will never work..."  
They will never survive..."*

The list of negatives is endless. But then you are talking about the Savannah Cheetah Foundation—the people who were told that it would be impossible to breed 16 cheetahs from small groups of five adults in one year.

Appropriately, the SCF is located in the Free State Province of South Africa, where the province's coat of arms features two cheetahs. Historically, the Free State was the part of South Africa where the cheetah was most prolific and roamed the savannah. Even the license plates for all automobiles registered in the Free State carry a cheetah emblem. The Free State is cheetah country.

In February this year the SCF called a meeting with the seven land owners adjacent to the

Savannah preserve. Between all the parties present, they control about 74,000 acres of land. At this meeting the farmers heard an impassioned plea about the need to find new homes for the SCF cheetah, the desperate need for them to regain a small piece of their lost habitat, their need to have a few

"play trees." The result was nothing short of remarkable. Without exception every single one of the seven farmers present agreed that, when the cheetahs are ready, they can be reintroduced onto their lands. With this commitment, the SCF met with the state conservation authorities who have given the project their full support.

With these commitments in hand, now it is time for the SCF to scientifically and socially work through the details of a plan, using all the resources they can muster, that will allow humans, livestock, and cheetah to co-exist in the Free State. And the SCF team takes up the challenge with the same enthusiasm and confidence it began the breeding project. Carving out a future for the rapidly disappearing fastest hunter on earth will not be easy, and it will be costly, but it is a critical step in saving this beautiful animal from extinction. •



**We are dedicated safety, reliability and quality**

**We are focused on quality equipment to suit your needs:**

- **Chemical immobilization** (syringe poles, blow darts, CO2 guns)
- **Tracking equipment**
- **Stretchers/Litters**
- **Hazmat certified sanitation system** (Portable or stationary)
- **Reptile handling** ( Snake tubes, hooks, tongs, bags, protective gear)
- **Versa-nets** (Modular nets flex to help with netting - minimizes harm)



**We are innovative and will build  
customized equipment to fit your need.**

[www.ace-cap.com](http://www.ace-cap.com)

1-866-339-9960



**A**nimal  
Capture  
Equipment, Inc.



# Convention Auction

The convention auction is traditionally the biggest fundraiser for FCF and all proceeds go into the FCF general fund. The auction tradition began in the 1970s. Danny Treanor was the first auctioneer and JB Anderson took over those duties in 1990 and continues to delight the banquet crowd with his lively antics.

Donated items of all sorts are up for bid. There are always plenty of cat related clothing, photos, paintings, cat equipment, books... just about anything you can think of within reason and good taste can be donated.

All of the items in the auction are donated by members or corporate supporters of FCF. Don't forget, auction items donated are 100% tax deductible for the value of the item. Just let the people at the FCF registration table know if you want a receipt for tax purposes.

If you are coming to the convention, you can bring the items with you. Another option for those unable to attend, or with items they don't want to travel with, is shipping the items to Bobby Bean or Kevin Chambers. They are members of the convention committee and will be driving to the convention and make sure your donation gets auctioned.

While some items will be designated "auction only," the rest of the items will be put on display along with a silent auction bid sheet beside each item. Anytime the hospitality room is open, you'll be able to view the silent auction items. If something catches your eye, you simply find the bid sheet for that item and write down your name and the amount you are willing to give. If someone has already made a bid, you'll have to increase that bid by at least one dollar. After you make your bid, you'll have to keep an eye on the bids to see if someone else outbids you. This can go on up until the time that is set for the bidding to end, sometime Saturday evening. We'll give everyone plenty of notice exactly when that time is, so that you'll be able to make your final bids. The highest bid at that time is the winner.

JB and his assistants will put up the "auction only" items for sale during the banquet. We'll have bidder numbers for

everyone and these numbers will need to be shown when JB pulls the trigger and says, "Sold!" After the auction is over, everyone will check in with the auction clerk and settle up for their purchases. If you want to mail your purchases back home rather than taking them on the plane with you, we can help make arrangements with the hotel to get this done.

For those wanting to send auction items ahead of time, send them so they arrive before Monday, July 24 to either:

*Robert Bean*  
(UPS shipping address)  
500 Callahan Rd  
Knoxville, TN 37912  
(US Postal Service shipping address)  
P. O. Box 26201  
Knoxville, TN 37912-9719  
WILDCON2B@aol.com  
Ph: 865-938-0702

*Kevin Chambers*  
7816 N. County Road 75W  
Shelburn, IN 47879  
ZooARC@att.net  
PH: 812-397-2302



#6910  
24, 14oz cans-25lbs/cs  
(1 can feeds a 40lb cat)  
MC/VISA only. No COD's

**Complete Feline Diet**  
chicken formula designed  
for **EXOTIC CATS**  
**Buy Wholesale Direct**  
**From Distributor!**

only \$29/cs  
+ UPS shipping

**Great Eastern Distributors**  
255 Ottley Drive, Atlanta, GA 30324  
Phone 800-251-5800 Fax: 800-251-2515

# The Return of the King

*Haida Bolton*

Whoever said the lion is the king of the jungle? I'd say the Asian lion is the king of the world!

The Asian lion once inhabited land stretching from Greece to India. Now this animal, differing from its African cousin mainly due to a less prominent mane, only lives in the wild in one park in India.

Nearly pushed to extinction at the turn of the twentieth century, the population of this magnificent beast has grown from less than twenty in 1913 to a whopping 350 in 2005. One might argue that 350 of one species living in the wild is not much, but it is too much for the limiting boundaries of Gir Sanctuary and National Park in Gujarat State in Western India.

Lions are starting to leave the sanctuary and park, which combined cover an area of 1412 square kilometers. There is too much competition for feeding territories. So those searching for unclaimed territory wander into nearby villages where they cause fear and panic among the people and are shot as a result. In 1995, a pride consisting of one lioness and two cubs wandered as far as the Arabian Sea. Luckily they were captured and brought back to the park before any harm came to them.

Both Gir National Park (259 sq. km) and Gir Sanctuary (1153 sq. km) house a host of other wildlife. 38 species of mammal, 300 species of bird, 37 species of reptile and more than 2000 species of insects make up this unique ecosystem. The lions feed mainly on the 40,000 spotted deer, known locally as chital. Other common feasts include sambar, nilgai, wild boar, and domestic cattle and buffalo usually owned by the Maldharis.

The Maldharis are a peace-loving people who have lived in harmony with their environment probably since forever. This nomadic, vegetarian community live within the sanctuary. They earn their living by selling milk, ghee, and manure. Often they refuse the large cash compensation that the forestry department offers for the loss of their livestock to their predators.

The growing communities both within and surrounding the sanctuary are a constant threat to the size of the lion's home.

The forestry department works constantly to educate and resettle these people. With the constant threats of a diminishing forest, cyclones, drought, and disease, the staff who work tirelessly at protecting the lion need to find a second home for them.

In neighboring Madhya Pradesh, east of Gujarat State, the forest department has been working for nearly ten years to pre-

pare another habitat for the Asian lion. Kuno Palpur Sanctuary in the north of this state will hopefully, one day, receive some of the overflow from Gir.

It is in this second home where the lion can continue its upward climb, soaring (or roaring!) to the top, leaving us in awe of his comeback and truly proving he is the king of the world. •



Lyle Kristiansen

**Ungulate joins Asian lion cub for dinner**

## 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)

or write: Zoological Association of America

HC1, Box 747

Elgin, AZ 85611



*An organization of Zoos and Zooculturists  
supporting conservation,  
propagation & preservation.*

## White Lion Debut on David Letterman Show

Kevin Chambers' white lion cubs appeared on the David Letterman show with Jungle Jack Hanna. Kevin gave FCF members on the FCF chat list updates of his adventure, "We have a great suite and the lion cubs, Atlas and Denali, love it. I can't really blame them since it's been a long road trip and they are relieved to have a huge room to turn their motors on in. They've spent a couple of hours just running, wrestling, and exploring."

After the performance Kevin shared more details of the live show. "We ran a little later than we wanted getting to the Ed

Sullivan Theater because the traffic was horrific. They has barriers up on the street for us to unload and people were everywhere. Jack came over and asked for one of the cubs so he could pose for the media photographers there. When Denali came out, people "oohed" and "aaahed" while Denali took it all in stride and was the consummate professional cat model."

Kevin had brought the pair of rare white lion brothers for the show but the Hanna crew decided to have only one cub onstage, so Atlas got the call.

Kevin proudly commented, "I thought he did a great job and even Jack commented that that he was the best-behaved lion cub



**Kevin and cub**



he had ever had onstage. As I picked Atlas up from Jack onstage, Dave commented to me that he was a gorgeous animal."

After the show Jack had invited some special guests from Belgium to see the animals in private. The family loved watching the cubs running and playing in the hotel room.

FCF member Mark Levinson dropped by to visit Kevin and his cubs and shared a late dinner with Kevin before returning in time to watch the Letterman show on TV.

Jungle Jack Hanna is known for his humorous animal appearances on the Letterman Show. Jack's "edutainment" philosophy is based on the understanding that people remember more when they are listening. His amusing style grabs the attention of the audience insuring they will learn something about the animals. Even people who could care less about animals pay attention to Jack.

Kevin has known Jack for many years. "Jack may not be an astrophysicist, but he isn't as goofy as he appears on TV." •



**Danali (seated) looks down on Atlas at their comfy Manhattan digs**



## 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!

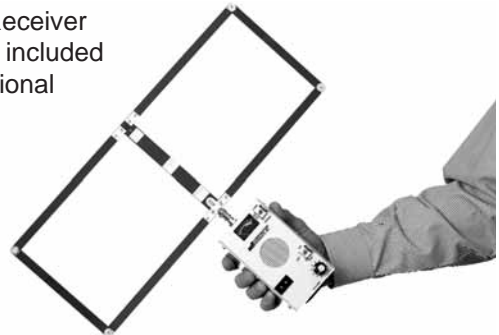
**PT-2W** Transmitter Collar with CR123A  
Battery for over 1 month of continuous use

**\$150.00**



**WR-100** Receiver  
shown with included  
FA-1 Directional  
Antenna

**\$250.00**



[www.com-spec.com](http://www.com-spec.com)

**Communications Specialists, Inc.**

**800-854-0547**

426 West Taft Avenue • Orange, CA 92865-4224

# Cougar Sanctuary

*Cynthia Thanos-Wade*

There is a beautiful full moon. The sunset is gorgeous and I am on a quick trip to Wal-Mart. I grab oatmeal bath, Benadryl, and a sinus medication. My head and body itch. My eyes are swollen and there are blotches on my skin. I dash home and into the shower and then into an oatmeal bath. Believe it or not this is the ending to a really great day.

My name is Cynthia Thanos-Wade but go by “C.C.” or Artwizard. I am a multi-talented artistic person. I am also on a spiritual path. This path has led me to the online Grey School of Wizardry. The school offers a wide base of interesting to unusual classes. I am now beginning my second year of a seven-year course of study. I am majoring in Beast Mastery and taking a minor in Metaphysics. In my first year I took classes in core energy practices, ethics, wizardry, divination, mantic arts, dream interpretation, totems and familiars, etc.

For Beast Mastery 101, one of our assignments was to go to the zoo. The zoo from here is a three hour drive one way! I asked my instructor if I could report on the cougar sanctuary in our area instead. The questions on this essay included whether or

not the animals appeared normal, and did they seem to be enjoying their lives and why. I gained more than expected: an awesome experience and a dean’s list nomination for this essay!

Other than getting lost on the back roads, the cougar sanctuary “NOAH” was well worth the trip. A man fishing at a cement bridge gave me the final directions to get there. I found myself honking at a ten-foot fence not knowing if anyone was there to greet me.

Bart appeared. He thought it would be a good idea to leave my chihuahua puppy in the crate in my truck. I have heard stories of the wild cats drooling when small children have come to visit. This man is very talkative and obviously very much in love with the big cats and the role he and his wife Lynn play keeping.

Bart starts with a quick discussion of one of the cats, Hercules. This beautiful cougar was brought to NOAH to be hand reared and socialized by the Culvers before being exported to Greece, but the buyer couldn’t take him. Hercules now has a permanent home at Noah. Many of these cats have come here that way. Someone divorces, gets relocated, or no longer wants, or no

longer can keep a wild cat.

Bart has done a beautiful job making the environment friendly for outsiders and the cats themselves. He has built tall, fully covered cages. There are large pieces of trees for the cats to hone their nails. The fences have overhangs, which are hot-wired. All cages have double doors at the entrances.

Many of the cats born at the NOAH facility are raised in Bart’s home, then they spend time in an inside room that connects by way of a wooden bridge to the outdoor enclosure. Eventually they are moved to their own habitat specially built for them. For one pair of bobcats, there is a tunnel from the outside enclosure into the Culver’s bedroom in the house.

The cats seem to be in an environment closely matched to their natural habitat. They seem to enjoy their lives and love when they are petted and talked to. Bart has a close one-on-one relationship with every cat on the property.

Bart and Lynn Culver originally started with one cougar, Mercury. Next they took in seven month-old Tara, who was the product of a domestic dispute. Tara, who died at nineteen years of age in Bart’s arms, birthed thirty babies in her lifetime. She delivered



**Bart plays with caracal**

her babies into the lap of Lynn who, along with Bart, were the midwives for every birth. Tara would have it no other way.

Tara became lost in six acres of deep woods shortly after the Culver's got her. This seemed to fulfill her need for bonding with people, as it reenacted her earlier experience when the wife of her former owner deliberately released her into the woods where she spent many days and even suffered some frostbite on one of her ears before being rescued. Bart became her new savior.

Apparently cougars have a very emotional way of vocalizing when they are worried or upset. They will scream. And vocalize she did, till Bart found her. With a wild eyed look she ran to him and jumped into his arms from a twenty-five mile an hour speed. From then on they were bonded.

While visiting I got educated on the relationship the Egyptians and the pharaohs had with the cat. This society idolized the cat as an ideal form on earth.

Other things I learned this day:

I learned how much it costs to buy a mountain lion (\$1,000), provided you are allowed by law to have them, which is unlikely. Personal ownership is not encouraged. You would probably have to set up your own sanctuary. The cats are excellent mothers and stay with their young nearly 24 hours a day. (They have proof from a strategically placed video camera.)

Large cats are not vicious as the myth implies. With love and attention they adapt well in captivity.

There have been instances where a zoo has given up non-breeding a pair only to have them with offspring in this loving environment.

Bobcats rule. They are the dominant cats.

AZA (American Zoo Association) is a self-interest political and powerful group which dictates laws to impede private sector ownership or any "taming."

NOAH generates the income to survive by selling babies to the right people. These people are sometimes zoos.

NOAH is also currently participating in a baseline data study on Canada lynx hormones. They use dye and collect cat "poop." The "poop" is then sent away for testing and will help us to understand how cats do during a reintroduction program.

I began itching at the third cage. It was then I remembered I am allergic to cats! All in all, this was still a worthwhile trip. Gas and allergy medicines to get there: \$19.47. Time for travel and the tour: three hours. Cougar experience: priceless! •



Sultan and Sakima are the first two tigers to enjoy Tiger Creek's new waterfall habitat.

# Proposed Constitutional Amendments to Article IV and Article V

According to the FCF Constitution,

## ARTICLE VI - Membership Participation

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

There have been two Constitutional amendments submitted and signed by Lynn Culver, Gail Laviola, and Nanette McGann for the FCF member's consideration. Please read these changes carefully and then be sure to exercise your right to vote by filling out the enclosed ballot and mailing it back before July 20, 2006.

We move that Article IV of the constitution be amended as follows and the effective date of the amendment to be January 1, 2007:

## ARTICLE IV - Officers

### Strikeout

~~1. The officers of the Feline Conservation Federation shall be a President, Vice President, a Secretary/Treasurer, and eight (8) Directors. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed in the by laws.~~

~~2. The officers shall be elected by preferential ballot of the entire membership to serve for two (2) years or until their successors are elected, and their terms of office~~

~~shall begin January 1 of the year following an election.~~

~~3. In addition to four (4) elected Directors, there shall be four (4) Life Directors.~~

And replace with:

1. The officers of the Feline Conservation Federation shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and seven (7) Directors. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed in the By-laws.

2. The officers shall be elected by preferential ballot of the entire membership to serve for two (2) years or until their successors are elected, and their terms of office shall begin January 1 of the year following an election.

### *Discussion and reasoning*

This amendment to Article V defines the board of directors into four officers and directors, and eliminates the sub-division between term and life director.

This amendment will separate the secretary/treasurer position into two offices. These are extremely important officer positions which requires a lot of volunteer time.

When the Long Island Ocelot Club adopted this Constitution, there was only one board meeting a year, held at the annual convention. The sources of income were limited to membership dues, some donations, and auction income. Expenses were mainly for publishing the bi-monthly newsletter and bookkeeping duties were much simpler.

Today, the FCF has at least three internet board meetings in addition to the annual Convention meeting, and for the past few years, there have been special meetings called to address specific issues that could not wait for the next quarterly meeting. The secretarial duties and corporate paperwork must be kept up to date.

Even more change has occurred with the treasurer duties. The FCF annual operating budget has doubled, totaling over \$40,000 in the last few years, necessitating the filing of federal 990 tax returns. The quarterly reports and annual budget must keep track of membership dues, convention registrations, advertising fees, corporate sponsorship, conservation donations, and auction proceeds. These income sources must be

maintained and balanced against a host of corporate and membership expenses that keep expanding.

The corporation will be better served by not piling so many responsibilities upon one person. Should health, employment, or personal crisis prevent timely execution of these duties, the FCF Corporation suffers doubly. The time is right to divide these diverse duties upon two separate board members.

The total number of board members has not been reduced, therefore if this amendment to the Constitution passes, the board of directors will need to reduce the number of director positions by one. This will be accomplished by amending the by-laws to eliminate one Life Director position from the board.

As presently written, four Life Directors must fill the FCF board. Life Directors are defined in the FCF by-laws to be a person whose main duty is to assist where needed and assure that the organization stays within its statement of purpose. Further, eligibility for a Life Director position is restricted to those who have previously served on the board.

Having a board that must contain persons that have previously served insures continuity between administrations. But in this fast-paced world of ever changing interests, and with less time than ever for outside volunteer service, it is inhibiting to find four FCF members qualified to run for Life Director and another prior board member for president, which also has that same limitation. Reducing the requirement for the number of former board members to a total of four will still accomplish the same goals of providing continuity and corporate oversight.

Please note that the language of the motion states that if this amendment to the Constitution passes, it will not go into effect until January 2007. This means that the present secretary/treasurer will continue to serve out his term unaffected in 2006. However, nominations and election ballots for the next term of officers will reflect the new division of two separate positions. Those already nominated to run for secretary/treasurer will automatically be entered into both



ances unless the candidate declines a nomination in writing.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment for Article V

We move that Article V of the Constitution be amended as follows:

ARTICLE V - Nomination and Elections  
Strike out:

~~1. Nominating Committee:~~

~~A. The Nominating Committee shall consist of the Executive Board. It shall be the duty of this Committee to nominate members for the offices to be filled on January 1, of each alternate year.~~

~~B. The Nominating Committee shall accept proper nominations as given in Section 3, from the membership and after ascertaining the willingness of the proposed candidates, shall present these candidates coincidentally with the Committee's own nomination.~~

~~2. An officer serving any term shall be a candidate for the succeeding term unless the officer holder specifically declines the nomination in writing to the Nominating Committee.~~

~~3. A member shall be considered properly nominated by the membership if he is willing to assume the office and there are two (2) valid Feline Conservation Federation members' signatures on the document presenting his name to the Committee and if the document is mailed to the Committee by March 20 of the election year. Any nominee for the President of Feline Conservation Federation shall have been elected and served at least one term of office in another position of the Board of Directors of the organization or shall have been a paying member in good standing for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive years to include the election year. (9/98)~~

~~4. The Nominating Committee shall report its nominations, those from the membership, and the officers who are candidates for another term by April 1 of the election year for publication in the May edition of the Corporation newsletter.~~

~~5. The completed ballots shall be mailed to the Nominating Committee within five (5) weeks of the distribution of the September edition of the Corporation newsletter.~~

And replace with:

1. The nomination period shall open

May 1 of the even numbered years and nominations must be received no later than August 10. Nominations can be sent either electronically or by US mail to the secretary.

2. An officer serving any term shall be a candidate for the succeeding term unless the office holder specifically declines the nomination in writing to the secretary.

3. A member shall be considered properly nominated if the nominee is willing to assume the office and there are two (2) valid Feline Conservation Federation members' signatures on the document(s) presenting the name to the secretary. Any nominee for the President of Feline Conservation Federation shall have been elected and served at least one term of office in another position of the Board of Directors of the organization or shall have been a paying member in good standing for a minimum of ten (10) consecutive years to include the election year.

4. A list of the nominees shall be published in the September issue of the election year Corporation newsletter along with ballots for elections.

5. Eligible voters shall return the completed ballots to the address specified on the ballot, within five (5) weeks of the distribution of the September edition of the Corporation newsletter.

*Discussion and reasoning for this proposed amendment*

The main purpose of this Constitutional Amendment is to change the nomination period from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year, and coordinate it with the annual convention. This allows everyone more time to consider running for office (presently we require nominees to

make a two-year commitment a year in advance) and gives those who show up at convention the opportunity to be nominated for office during the general membership meeting.

Further, this amendment updates the options for the nomination procedure. In the 1970's when the Constitution was written, there was no faxes, scanners, or e-mail. The language in Article V reflects the technology available for that time, and requires nominations to be sent by US mail to the nomination committee, which were 11 different people. The amended Article V allows members to send a signed nomination by fax or to scan a signed document and attach it to e-mail, or use US postal mail, and send to the secretary only. The secretary of the FCF will then contact the candidate to insure that submissions are genuine and that the nominee agrees to accept the candidacy.

The constitutional mandate for the board to form a Nomination Committee is also eliminated. For the past few elections this process has not been strictly followed. Board members have nominated independently. Should a board decide to initiate a nomination committee, it is free to do so, but it will no longer be bound to do so by the Constitution.

Since the Constitution states in Article VI that amendments that pass become effective August 1, should this amendment to Article V pass, the nomination period in 2006 would re-open for an additional 10 day period from August 1 to August 10. Those previously nominated would be valid candidates, but new nominations would also be accepted during this ten-day period in 2006. •



D. SAUVÉ - 1999  
IDEA: ROB. TRIPP

Reprinted with permission

## BoD Candidates

Candidates nominated for FCF Board of Directors

The nominating committee has verified the following slate of nominees for the 2006 FCF board of directors election. Ballots will be sent out in the September issue of the FCF magazine and the membership will have five weeks from the mailing date to return their completed ballots. Those elected will be serving to serve their two-year term of office January 1, 2007.

**PRESIDENT:**

Lynn Culver

**VICE PRESIDENT:**

Marcus Cook  
Bob Turner

**SECRETARY/TREASURER:**

Kevin Chambers  
Harold Epperson  
Teri Morast

**DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES:**

Carolyne Clendinen

**DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY:**

Irene Satterfield  
Mindy Stinner

**DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION:**

Carol Bohning  
Sara Comstock

**DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AFFAIRS:**

Evelyn Shaw

**LIFE DIRECTOR (3 POSITIONS):**

Bobby Bean  
Leann Montgomery  
George Stowers

## Special Board Meeting, April 2006

President Robert Turner notified the board via email of a Special Board Meeting to be conducted from 1:00 AM on April 14, 2006 through midnight on April 21, 2006 for the purpose of filling the Life Director vacancy created by the resignation of Tracy Wilson. Lynn Culver entered a motion in the website board forum to nominate Nanette McGann and a second was entered by Kevin Chambers. No other nominations were received for the position. Votes were entered by Robert Bean, Carol Bohning, Kevin Chambers, Carolyne Clendinen, Marcus Cook, Lynn Culver, Harold Epperson, Evelyn Shaw, and Robert Turner. The phone-in vote by JB Anderson was entered by Kevin Chambers. The tally was Ten Yes Votes. Motion Passed.

—Harold Epperson



## Call for Agenda Items for the FCF General Membership Meeting

All FCF members who wish to present topics for discussion at the general membership meeting during the 2006 FCF convention may submit them to the secretary.

Topics from members unable to attend the convention will be placed on the agenda and presented at the meeting by one of the board members.

Please mail the topic in its entirety no later than July 14 to FCF Secretary, 3310 Remington Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46227-8126. •

**Susan Karakash gets a nifty new hair-do courtesy of Sultan her serval. Photo: Jenna Bolinder**

# The White Lion: King of Kings

Kevin Chambers

*“Rumors of the existence of pure white lions have lived in the African oral tradition for centuries. But there is only one place on earth where they have materialized—the Timbavati region, bordering the Kruger National Park of South Africa. To the African elders, used to looking for spiritual signs in nature, the white lions’ arrival was the fulfillment of ancient prophecy that identified these majestic creatures as angelic messengers from God. Identified as a sacred site by African kings for many hundreds of years, the name ‘Tsimba-vaati’ in the ancient Shangaan language means ‘the place where star lions came down from the heavens.’ Born to the golden lion prides that roam the vast Timbavati region, the African elders explained their mysterious white color in spiritual terms, meaning purity and enlightenment, beyond all racial connotations. White is sunlight, all the colors of the spectrum in one—beyond color, creed, race, or gender. The white lions are a magnificent icon for South Africa’s rainbow nation, and a unifying symbol across world culture.”* —Linda Tucker, author of “Mystery of the White Lions: Children of the Sun God”.

Until 1975, the white lion was just that... a mythical beast surrounded in a surreal

mist. Chris McBride was doing research in the Timbavati area in northeastern South Africa when a litter of cubs was born to the pride he was following. Much to his surprise, two of the cubs were white! Chris named these cubs Temba, the white male; Tombi, the white female; and Vela, the normal colored male cub. Chris documented the development of these cubs in his book, “The White Lions of Timbavati”. Once the cubs were around a year old, Chris realized that these lions stood little chance of surviving to maturity in the wild. Their spectacular coloration made the very conspicuous during hunts and it was clear that they held a social status of low esteem among the pride. Chris wrote a follow up book, “Operation White Lion” in which Chris agonized over letting Mother Nature control the destiny of these magnificent animals or stepping in himself and bring them into the safety and security of captivity. Another local pride had also had a white female cub, Phuma, born about the same time. She suddenly disappeared from that pride and Chris knew that she had been lost forever. This helped him make up his mind. He could not stand idly by and allow these wondrous animals to once again fade into the realm of myth.

Temba, Tombi, and Vela were captured by Chris McBride and taken to the National

Zoo in Pretoria, South Africa. Here Temba sired several offspring. Vela, too, produced a few cubs. Unfortunately, Tombi died at a young age without passing on her genes.

A second line of white lions happened to develop at the same time at the Johannesburg Zoo. An injured male of normal color had been brought to the zoo in 1977. When he was bred back to his daughters, white cubs began to appear. These cats produced many cubs over the years and are the predominant bloodline today.

The third bloodline of white lions originated from a white male, Whity, captured from the wild in 1991 from the Hoedspruit area of South Africa. Whity went to the Mokwalo Game Preserve and was paired with a female carrying the white gene obtained from the Pretoria Zoo. They also produced many kittens.

White lions first arrived in North America in 1990 when a white female and two carrier males came to the Columbus Zoo at two years of age. Joany, Jespa, and Jady were later transferred to the Cincinnati Zoo in 1994. These three lions were the offspring of the original Temba, captured by Chris McBride.

In 1992, fate found Dave Wood, then curator at the Philadelphia zoo, traveling through Johannesburg with an extended layover. Dave decided to take in the Johan-



Male and female white lions



nesburg Zoo to help pass the time. He was astonished to find white lions there. Dave quickly made the contacts and made a deal to bring two white females, Jezebel and Vinkel, and one male carrying the white, Merlin, to the Philadelphia zoo. They arrived in July 1993. Merlin and Vinkel gave birth to the first white lions born in North America on March 24, 1994. The two white female cubs, Tandi and Kolwa, were exhibited with great response at the Philadelphia Zoo, and later were sent out to Dreher Park Zoo in West Palm Beach, FL and then on to Toronto Metro Zoo. From there they were exported to a German zoo for their breeding program. Merlin and Jezebel produced a single white female cub, Kanya, on May 26, 1994. Kanya now resides at the Toronto Metro Zoo. After producing the two litters, the females were implanted to prevent further breeding.

The next white lion to reach America was Carla, also a daughter of Temba, in April 1994. I imported her from England where she had been sent from Pretoria as a yearling.

Siegfried & Roy received their first white lions in 1995 from Johannesburg Zoo. Sarmoti, a white female, and Shaka, a carrier male, were received as cubs. They later received additional animals from Johannesburg Zoo and a zoo in Germany. Their successful breeding program has brought the total number of S&R white lions to 23. Besides several being on exhibit at Siegfried & Roy's Secret Garden at the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas, they have three white males, Wisdom, Courage, and Legend, on loan to the Toledo Zoo. Their white

sister, Gracious, is at the Cincinnati Zoo along with their mother, Prosperity, and father, Sunshine, and another white male, Prosperity.

In 1995, I sent my white female, Carla, to Cincinnati Zoo on breeding loan. The males at Cincinnati, Jady and Jespa were both very aggressive males and when either one was introduced individually with Joany, the Cincinnati white female, they would attack her. We had hopes that Joany and Carla could be put together and then introduce one of the males. The reasoning was that the females might come to the other's aid if the male attacked the other. Joany and Carla were eventually able to cohabitate, but it was not without much patience and expertise expended by Pat Callahan and his staff of keepers at Cincinnati Zoo.

Joany had a dominant personality and liked to express it. Carla had been hand raised and was a very meek cat. Joany took delight in showing her dominance over Carla and fights were a common event for a while. Eventually, the time came to try one of the males in with the girls. Jespa was a little less aggressive than Jady, so he was granted the honor. Again, the introduction was slow and at times worrisome. The relationship among the newly founded pride eventually progressed to the point that both Joany and Carla became pregnant. Joany was first, giving birth to Sunny, a single cub that was normal colored but carried the white gene. Sunny was eventually returned to a reserve in Africa by the Cincinnati zoo. Carla also gave birth to a single cub in March of 1996, Caren, who was a beautiful white girl. Joany gave birth to a second

white cub in September 1996, a female named Jeannette.

During 1996, I was able to purchase both Joany and Jespa and in 1997, moved them, along with Carla, to Busch Gardens-Tampa. Busch Gardens was opening a new exhibit, "The Edge of Africa." Jack Hanna did a show devoted to this new exhibit and I was proud to see a picture of Carla included in his opening collage of film clips seen on each of his episodes since then. Carla is in the upper right hand corner sitting in the back of a Land Rover. Unfortunately, later in 1997 Carla was killed by Joany while off exhibit. In one of their frequent tussles, Joany had bitten Carla in the throat and crushed her larynx. With the loss of Carla from the pride, the relationship between Joany and Jespa deteriorated to the point they had to be separated. Neither lion could ever be paired with another lion. Jespa died at age 18. Joany is now 18 and steadfastly refuses to allow another lion to cohabitate with her. That fact, due to the death of Caren as a result of anesthesia complications and of Jeanette by complications from a surgery for an impacted bowel, the aged Joany is the only representation the Pretoria line of white lions in America.

In 1998, I imported a pair of the Makwalo strain of white lions. This consisted of Busch, a white male, and Betty, a carrier female. The Audubon Zoo in New Orleans exhibited them for a year before being retired from exhibition to allow for better breeding away from the hubbub of public life. They have responded to the quiet life very well and have produced several cubs including five white males and one white female, as well as other cubs carrying the white gene. Some of these have been exhibited at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs, Capron Park Zoo in Attleboro, Massachusetts, Timbavati Zoo in the Wisconsin Dells, and The Zoo in Gulf Breeze, Florida.

A white lion hasn't been seen in the wild for over 12 years. Recently, the Global White Lion Protection Trust reintroduced a white lioness and her three cubs back into their natural habitat. This occurred in the Timbavati area and it is their hope that future generations of mankind will always be able to experience the mystic of the white lion in its magical homeland.

I would like to give a special thanks to the people who over the years have shared much of the above information with: Jeannette Williams, Dave Woods, Roy Horn, and

**New member focus:**

# A Tiger Named Pepper

By *Zuzana Kukol*

I loved animals ever since I can remember. Even as a little girl, I wouldn't sleep with a doll, I couldn't fall asleep unless I snuggled with my 2½ feet tall brown bear toy that was bigger than me.

My dream was to work with animals when I grew up. I was thinking about becoming a veterinarian, but that didn't happen due to many circumstances, so I 'settled' for having really big exotic pets.

It started with reptiles when I was a teenager and eventually, when the time was right and circumstances allowed it, I finally made my dream come true, I got my first tiger. I already had experience and owned smaller exotic cats, but this was a first *big* one.

I was warned that baby tigers can scream loud, almost like human babies, so when I got to the airport cargo pick up area, I just followed the scream. There was this cute striped bundle of joy sitting in the middle of her crate. I couldn't help myself, couldn't wait until we got to the truck, so I could take her out, keep her in my lap and enjoy the magical moment. I let my then husband drive the truck.

I will always remember this day, it was unusually hot and humid and the AC unit in my truck was broken. I was holding my

new baby tightly, pressing her against my chest, when, all of a sudden, she poops, really bad smelly diarrhea all over me, the kind only baby can produce, but them being too cute and innocent, you forgive them and just hold your breath. I didn't have any spare clothes with me, not even a towel or tissue and we had one hour drive home... we survived, without any permanent damage, but I guess I am not the most unbiased judge of that.

Since she is a white tiger with gray stripes, I named her "Pepper".

Pepper was more fun than I ever imagined. She had a 6-gauge outdoor cage to exercise and play with her two full grown Dobermans that raised her, and she also had an indoor cage downstairs.

The whole country house was modified to accommodate an indoor tiger by putting bars on the windows to prevent any possible escape.

She had a routine, sleeping with us in our bedroom, the only rule was, bed is for humans, floor is for tiger.

One night when Pepper was about seven months old and weighed 75 pounds, I had this weird dream: I was sitting at this long wooden picnic table at some noisy smoky cowboy bar, and somebody was walking/dancing on the table right in front

of my face and I couldn't breathe. As I am dreaming this, I wake up and see Pepper sleeping on my chest, like a dog or small domestic cat would and she didn't realize how heavy she was getting, she just wanted to snuggle with her human mom.

This was the only time Pepper broke the rule of bed belonging to humans only. She was sleeping in the bedroom until she was two years old and about 290 pounds, and during this time she had only three accidents. She was really good sleeping the whole night, sometimes I had to wake up the lazy cute bum in the morning and let her and dogs downstairs to the outside cage to play. At night they would all go to their indoor cage to dry off and then come upstairs to living room with us until we went to bed again. Pepper got really good walking up and down the stairs.

My then husband worked for Microsoft at the time, and both, Bill Gates' secretary and his personal technical assistant wanted to meet Pepper. So we brought her with us to Bill Gates' Microsoft building for Halloween. She was only few months old. There were people in costumes walking everywhere, so people just kept commenting on our animal kid's 'tiger costume,' so live tiger didn't seem too out of place on this day. This building is more guarded than other ones for obvious reasons, so we had to plan this all ahead and were escorted by guards to Bill Gates' office. Bill was not there on this day, but Pepper had fun in his office anyway. To this day I have no idea if Bill ever found out there was a tigress in his office.

Then there was a time when we were buying a new Jag since nobody seems to be making a car named *Tiger*. Pepper went with us to the dealership and negotiated us a great deal on black Jaguar.

One day my friend informed me that she got a great deal, local chicken farmer was going to sell us dead chickens that were not good enough for supermarkets. It was a great price and it was a whole prey/food for Pepper.

So I put the whole dead chicken with feathers/head/legs to Pepper's cage.

Poor 150 lb baby was scared to death, for three days she wouldn't go near the dead bird, too scary and since it wasn't



**Pepper enjoys expansive vistas from his 10,000 sq ft enclosure**

bloody like supermarket meat, she didn't consider it a food. I didn't let Dobermans in since these dogs would just eat it in two minutes.

Eventually, Pepper got over her fear of chickens and developed a ritual where she would take the chicken, remove the feathers with her teeth, wash the chicken in water dish, and eat it. Smart girl.

I will not deny that having a pet tiger is lots of fun, but also lots of responsibility. Educate yourself on local laws and talk to people who had many years of experience with tigers as trainers and handlers. I myself tried to do that, but was still given some stupid advice from novices, like wearing padded clothing, which I didn't follow since it didn't make sense. You need to teach your big cat that human skin is thin and soft and you should be able to interact with your big cat in T-shirt and they should never put their mouth on you.

Then there was this advice to wear heavy duty leather welder jacket. Guess what? It is almost raw leather, it smells like leather so you are likely going to get "playfully attacked" in that, after all, you smell like a prey.

When Pepper was two years old, the divorce happened and my ex moved out. Pepper was really attached to him and missed him a lot, and for few weeks she was only eating one-third of her usual food amount. I was worried about her.

When getting an exotic cat, you need to

plan ahead, plan forever, these animals have feelings and often get extremely attached to whoever raised them and some don't make an easy transition to a new owner. I would never say to anybody, "don't get a tiger." All I am saying is educate yourself, plan ahead so you are fair to yourself and to the animal as well.

After few weeks Pepper got better and realized she still had me, but for few years

location she often didn't want to go outside. Often I had to push her butt to go outside to the restroom. In the new location in warmer dry climate and with a huge cage with a view, she doesn't mind to do her potty outside, like a real tiger. She still needs canines as companions. She is very social and affectionate tigress toward the ones she knows and trusts, and cries if she is alone for even few minutes.



afterward, she didn't want any other man near her. She was fine with women she didn't know, but she would fear or get angry at all men approaching her cage. Some people assume when they meet an animal like this that the animal was abused by men and that is why it fears men. Not necessarily true. Often it is that the animal was raised by woman only or the animal loved a man before and then the man left.

In 2000, when Pepper was 2½ years old, I moved to a different state. For a while I kept bringing her to the house, but eventually I let her be a strictly outdoor tiger. She also got over her fear of men. She gets scared with big groups of people around, but otherwise she is fine with strangers and even adopted my boyfriend Scott as 'her new man'.

She loves her new home too. In the old

Cage is just under 10,000 square feet (including the double entry safety area), constructed of 12 feet tall 6-gauge chain link with barb wire overhang at the top in both directions, four feet inside the cage and under two feet outside.

The cage is divided in two sections. If one section needs to be serviced, Pepper can be locked in the other section. Both sections have desert plants, huge flat rocks for enjoying the sun, hiding places, and pools. The whole property, ten acres, is fenced with eight feet tall chain link and barb wire overhang in both directions. When people ask why so many security precautions, my answer is that I am trying to protect my animals from stupid people.

All Pepper has to do is be happy and doing what tigers like to do, sleep, eat, and be cute. •

# Your best Shot



**Clockwise from top:**

Bed o' servals—Cathy Spohrer • Fercos Brothers' Sinbad, a 15 year old guard cat—Zuzana Kukol • Lakota the cougar takes a swim—Gloria Johnson • Dora the tiger gets swimming lesson from Zuzana—Susan Tabas Tepper • Lakota fetches too—Gloria Johnson



## FCF Upcoming Events

### *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 this issue of the FCF magazine. Register today!

### *Playa de Oro Tours:*

**July 14-22, 2006** with tour guide Ramiro Buitron

**August 4-12, 2006** with tour guide Ramiro Buitron

<http://www.touchthejungle.org/GroupTours.htm>

Cougars Maya (8) and Charlie (11) walk along a pond at Panther Ridge Sanctuary.  
Photo: Judy Berens

