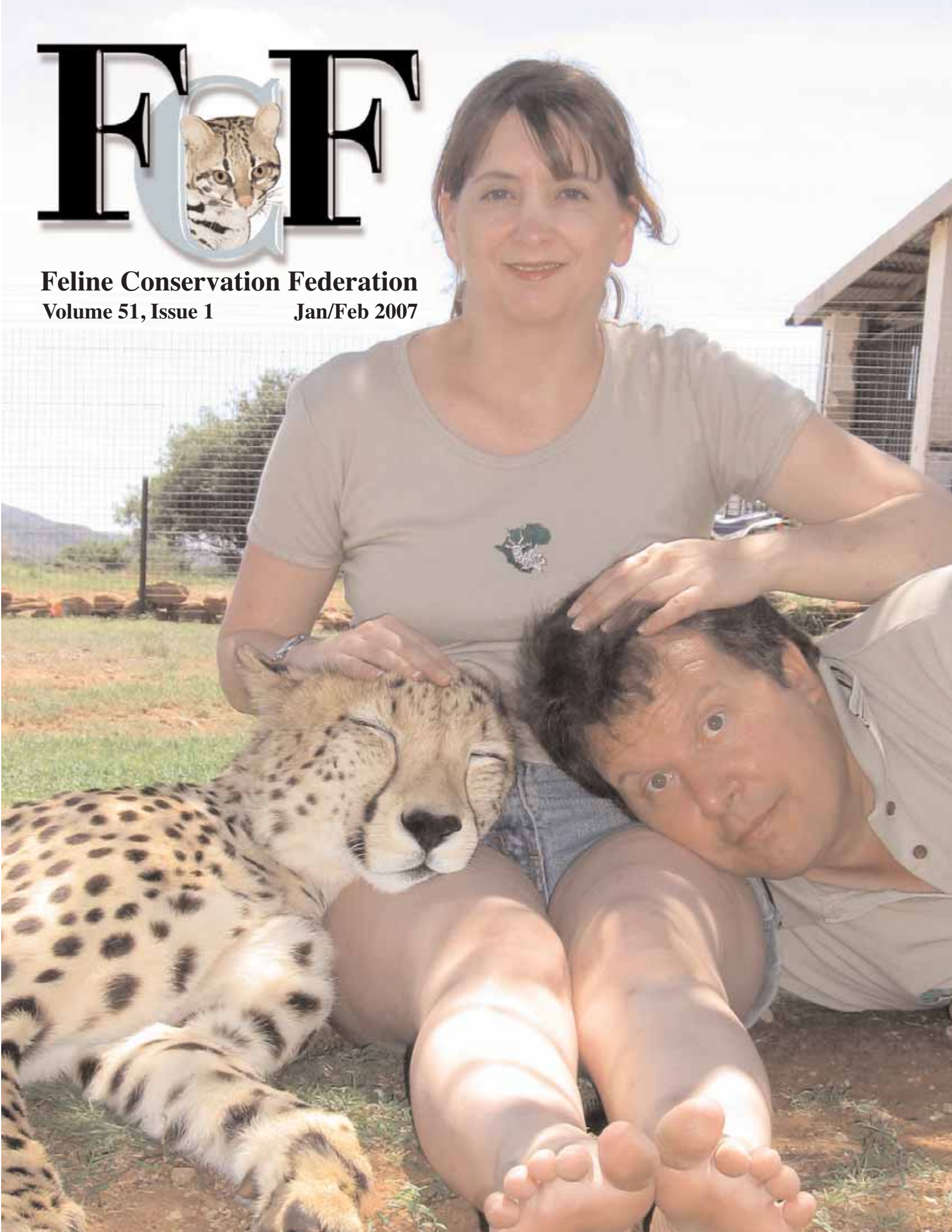


FCF

Feline Conservation Federation
Volume 51, Issue 1 Jan/Feb 2007



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Members are invited to participate in e-mail list discussions on-line at:
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The_FCF/

On the cover: FCF raffle winner Nancy pets Nikita(L) and Mike Friese at the Savannah, South Africa. Background: Nikita again—photo by Nancy De Fusco.



A working vacation: Nikita and Nala inspire Mike as he prepares the November/December issue.

* Outcome of contested races not available at press time.



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 on exotic feline ownership, husbandry, veterinary care, conservation and legislation are 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 first day of even 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. Dues are \$30 US, \$35.00 Canada, and \$40 international.

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Feline Conservation Federation

Letter from the President

FCF's many missions... and how you are an essential part of it

Happy holidays everyone. I know in this time of sharing friendships and family ties, we are all brought closer by our bond of mutual love for our cats. This January/February issue is mailed along with November/December's labor-of-love DVD issue—a full 50 years of LIOC/FCF newsletters that have been painstakingly scanned as TIFF files, uploaded to Mike's server, and then Photoshopped and converted by Mike into PDF files. This was the brainchild of Mike Friese, who so graciously offered to perform the hundreds of hours of volunteer labor to reassemble approximately 5,500 scans back into newsletters. Now for the first time ever, we can all learn about our long and proud heritage as conservationists. Thank you Mike for this most incredible gift to the FCF.

The health of an organization is measured by its membership's willingness to serve. Having strong leadership and a willing pool of volunteers is vital. I ask every FCF member to please get more active in the FCF. Write for the magazine, train for the web site team, host or attend the husbandry course, apply for facility accreditation, and volunteer to serve on a committee.

The FCF board voted to turn the conservation grants awards over to an independent committee of FCF members. The FCF Conservation Grants Program is funded in the annual budget and last year the African safari raffle project raised additional money. Committee members will be challenged to develop other fund-raising projects to increase the effectiveness of their grant giving, make sure researchers are aware of FCF grants, and choose which grant request best satisfies the mission of the FCF. Is wild feline conservation your great interest? Let us know. We are looking for volunteers for this committee.

This past year, FCF stepped up to the plate to fund captive conservation of exotic cats in need. The fundraiser for Serenity Springs was

initiated after Karen Sculac, wife of Nick and co-founder, passed away suddenly. FCF members raised \$6,800 to get the refuge past its initial crisis after her death. In this issue read about FCF pledging to raise \$2,000 to transport two tigers in Ohio to the Exotic Feline Rescue Center.

FCF members care about cats—both captive and wild—and this organization can aid cats in crisis. I will propose a feline assistance committee composed of FCF members, charged to raise funds, pick the projects for FCF to assist, and educate FCF about cats being aided. This is a way to pool our individual donations into an amount that accomplishes a satisfying goal, all in the name of the FCF. I will propose that the FCF corporation budget funds to get the program started. Committee volunteers anyone?

Education is the best achievement of the FCF, and the husbandry course is our most public example. I am happy to announce we have courses lined up for both coasts: Washington and Maryland as well as one in Dallas in conjunction with our annual convention. Because of the popularity of this program, we need additional FCF members to train to become certified instructors.

FCF members share our knowledge and experiences in many other ways too: our yahoo list, our magazine, or with phone

calls. I think it is time to publish a "best of" book, which chronicles exotic cat husbandry through the decades. FCF achievements in captive breeding, conservation and the wealth of husbandry experiences we have documented this past 50 years can be a powerful tool in educating new owners, legislators, and the general public. Anyone interested in this project?

I urge every FCF member to read the message published in this issue by Irene Satterfield, our new FCF Public Relations Director. She and I have discussed a plan to advance the FCF image as private conservationists. I ask that each FCF member work towards this image, and the best way you can contribute is to apply for FCF Feline Facility Accreditation.

I would like to thank the volunteers who serve on the accreditation committee and I am proud to congratulate the first FCF Accredited Feline Facility—Chateau Safari. I invite you to be next!

I'll be trying to get everyone involved this next two years and I look forward to your increased participation in FCF projects. Thank you everyone for your talents and your willingness to donate your funds, your ideas, your energy, and your help to spread good will and peace on earth.

—Lynn Culver



Lynn takes a nap with bobcat Sierra



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The Private Conservationist

Lions, tigers, and bears do not make good pets! I say that because most people define a good pet as a cat that never misses the litter box, a cat that will enjoy a can of food or some dry kibble thrown down, and a cat that never acts moody or aggressive, and can be ignored until the owner feels like being entertained. As we know, this is not the definition of caring for a wildcat. So can we say they make “good pets?” Not really.

On the other hand, too many people subscribe to the belief that all wild animals belong in the wild—regardless. But today’s nature is not so natural anymore. Home ranges are fragmented or decimated. Wild felines have a tenth of the area in which to find food, find refuge for their young, and live clear of their predators. They dodge cars, bulldozers, and bullets on a daily basis. They succumb to illnesses from stress, crowding, and pollution.

Some in our society accept keeping wildlife in captivity, but think that wildcats are single-minded killing machines, and are far too dangerous to be kept in any setting except a certified zoo and that zoos alone are all that is needed to address conservation issues.

We know that zoos must support a myriad of species with limited resources and cage-space. Zoos are challenged with administrative and financial burdens. Zoos are pressured to keep animals that draw in the public and to retire elderly, inactive animals to keep costs down. Breeding programs are hugely expensive and have little to no return on investment.

This leaves the members of the Feline Conservation Federation to ensure wildcats exist into the future—not for our future, but for the cats’ futures.

We know this, and we must help others understand. As public relations director, I will be working to create the following public and media image:

FCF is comprised of expert breeders who carefully manage gene pools, sanctuary owners who recognize that each and every wildcat’s life is precious, private zoos and educators that exhibit to the public and private keepers that provide homes, allowing these cats to take on ambassador roles.

FCF members will not kill a cat simply because that cat’s DNA did not meet high standards or was not necessary for potential procreation. Instead these cats go to highly trained, private keepers who take every appropriate opportunity to let the cat speak for its own species and help engage society into caring about the environment and species survival.

And below is how I would like you to see and represent yourself:

Each person that is a member of the FCF that owns a wildcat is more than the typical pet owner. FCF members are knowledgeable keepers of an endangered gene pool that educate others about conservation and wildcats. FCF members are more highly trained and skilled than anyone else that owns these wildcats.

Once we no longer have to divert our time and energy to just continue to exist, the FCF can focus on changing the perception of wildcats, and the whole issue of whether any species of cat is “domesticated,”

including the housecat. But first, we need the legal right to continue to exist.

My goal is to elevate the status of the FCF and its members as legitimate owners and breeders of wildcats. My approach will be well rooted in conservation and an educational-based message while reinforcing that FCF members are specially trained, responsible keepers, working for conservation. The FCF message will convey the image that you are safer living next door to an FCF member’s lion than you are visiting an AZA zoo.

I will consider this successful 1) if any states, counties or local governments allow certified members of the FCF to continue to own their wildcats while passing other bans (this must be done in conjunction with the Legal Director), 2) if our membership grows as a possible result of our message appealing to a broader audience, 3) we have more favorable reports by the media.

This is my public relations campaign for the FCF. I am open to suggestions and questions. In the end, I want to ensure no one takes my wildcats or yours.

I hope my plan makes members think and come up with new ideas to add, or maybe even a whole new campaign I should consider.

—Irene Satterfield



Irene and her caracal, Bongo.

Conservation—an Act of Love

By Bart Culver

Because of a caracal named Batman who would not eat until he kissed me, I love every caracal in the world.

Because of a serval named Star who loved to play soccer, I love every serval in the world.

Because of a cougar named Max who slept in my bed and purred me to sleep, I love every cougar in the world.

Because of a lynx named Ewok the peacemaker, who broke up fights and groomed the combatants until they purred, I love every lynx in the world.

Because of a bobcat named Buzz who rode on my shoulders, gave me wild hairdos and loved everyone he met, I love every bobcat in the world.

Because of Princess, the most beautiful

tiger in the world, who fought to live because I would not let her die, I love every tiger in the world.

Because of cougars Mercury, Tara, Arjan, Cinni, Sharu, Sampson, Hercules, and Mishi and so many more I embraced as my friends and children, I cannot bear the thought that these noble creatures will no longer walk the earth.

The intimate, personal love I have shared with these wild creatures is the only way to truly understand the mind, care about the suffering, respect the rights, value the existence, and commit to the protection of these creatures in the wild. It is the path all great conservationists follow.

Because of pethood, I am a conservationist. Because of pethood, conservationists will fight the despoilers of this world and



Bobcat Muffin catches a ride on Bart's shoulder.

never surrender. Exotic pet owners have a commitment to conservation as extraordinary as the animals they love.

People from the sterile world may have lofty ideals about the value of nature to humanity; hence they become hypothetical nature lovers. But they cannot understand that nature, as the work of deity, has an absolute right to exist regardless of its value to humanity.

You cannot really know this until you have held nature in your arms, felt its heart beat, and wept for joy. I submit to you that it is precisely this depth of commitment to saving nature that has put us under attack in a culture bent on destroying nature.

All of nature is under attack. Every pet owner is a sanctuary. Our love will drive us to rant and rave about what is being destroyed—to tell people about their guilt. The AR fanatic/corporate coalition offers a more comfortable place to put the guilt—on us. We are anti-social for keeping animals to be companions instead of food. And of course, if we're the bad guys for keeping nasty nature around, they have to denigrate the fact that we are way ahead of them in conservation breeding. They have to turn the facts totally upside down, and make the preposterous claim that the majority of tigers in the world are irrelevant to conservation. They say people should not be allowed to breed wild animals for commerce. How utterly ludicrous.

I know that commerce is destroying nature and only commerce has the power to save it. I choose to make a living helping nature. This is a noble idea and a divine right. A just society will encourage and support conservation through commerce, not campaign against it. We will be a just society only if truth prevails over hysteria. •



Geoffroy's cat, Jasmine, thinks she is really Bart's cat.

Growing Up “Manolo”

By Judy Berens

Manolo the ocelot was born at Panther Ridge Sanctuary on June 12, 2005—the union of 4 year-old Delilah and a very young Macho Man. What I had thought was harmless play between the two of them obviously escalated to a whole different level when I wasn’t looking. She basically robbed the cradle. Little Macho Man was only 11 months old when he did the deed and became a dad... way earlier than would have been expected. The two of them lived together until only a few weeks before she gave birth. I separated them because she began to show a bit of aggression when he got too close to her den box igloo. They had previously spent many a nap curled up together.

Delilah showed very little that would indicate that she was pregnant. The only thing noticeable was her coat was radiant and her appetite was fantastic. Usually a finicky eater, I was happy to see her eager to eat and happily increased her feed—not knowing that was the best thing I could have done.

The first week in June was regular worming, shots, and check up time. A couple of days before the vet came, I noticed that her nipples were becoming larger, pink and seemed to be very warm. It’s really nice to have a cat that you can thoroughly inspect. The day of the vet visit, I held her up for him to get a good look. We still couldn’t fathom that she was pregnant, after all he was too young. Anyway, we decided to hold off on any shots or worming. That proved to be a good call.

A few days later at feeding time I thought it remarkable that my eager eater was not at the door waiting for her meal. I peeked into her igloo to check that she was okay. There she was—a regal look on her face, front legs crossed and a tiny wet baby



nursing contentedly on her tummy. I could tell that she had been licking him from the patterns on his damp coat. He could not have been more than an hour old.

The igloo was spotless—no sign of the birth—she had already cleaned up the evidence. Nature is incredible. I tentatively reached in, not sure if she would allow me near, and she stretched to lick my hand. What trust! I picked up the perfect, tiny creature and could tell immediately that it was a boy as ocelots are “proud” even at birth. He felt like a beating heart wrapped in tissue thin spotted silk. A quick kiss and then back to mom for more milk.

What an eater! His little belly was always round and she kept him impeccably groomed and clean. Eat... sleep... eat... sleep... eat... sleep. I bought a postal scale to keep track of his progress though you could tell by looking that he was gaining daily. Everything was picture perfect.

Then tragedy! July 13. Manolo was one month old and crawling around very actively. On a stormy, rainy night he managed to squeeze through an impossibly

small space and into an area of the enclosure where Delilah could not retrieve him. He was out all night in the cold rain; his mother must have been frantic.

The next morning, I expected to see mom and baby safely curled up together only to find her alone in the igloo with a vacant look on her face and no Manolo in sight. A rapid search revealed him—a damp, cold, frail lump of fur. I thought he was dead, but his heart was still beating. He obviously needed medical help immediately, so I tucked him inside my shirt for warmth and called one of my vets. By the time I got him to a local vet he was warm and dry, but not very active. He didn’t have signs of respiratory distress so we decided to put him back with Delilah to see if he wanted to cuddle up and nurse. The thought was to monitor him constantly to see which way his condition was going. Any sign of distress would mean that we would have to pull him and start appropriate treatment and bottle feeding. To me, what happened next was inconceivable. Upon presenting him to her, she looked away as though he wasn’t even there. She wanted nothing to do with the poor little guy. Apparently, she had given him up for lost, and had no interest in this baby that just didn’t smell right after his session with the vet.

The decision about bottle feeding had been made by Delilah. I was his new mom. Fortunately, he took to the bottle very quickly and was not shy about demanding food. He never did get any of the illnesses I feared would beset him, but a strange transformation did occur: his perfect coat became discolored; the white was no longer



white, but beige and dull, his skin rough and bumpy and flaky. He was clearly having a hard time, but it was hard to pinpoint what was wrong and even harder to come up with a plan for aggressive treatment of such a young cat. It was determined to be a yeast fungus that had taken over his body. I started with mild antifungal baths, to no avail. It was everywhere, even his eyes and ears. His little face was a mess.

At four months of age, when the vets thought he was strong enough, a regimen of systemic anti-fungal and antibiotic medications was implemented. Little success. Diet changes were made to eliminate food allergies. No success. Immune system boosters were added. We were not sure if they are helping, but they probably couldn't hurt. Manolo has now been treated with almost every conceivable combination of conventional and homeopathic remedies. To date, the most successful are his weekly baths. He started out in my bathtub and graduated to the shower where we both soap up, wait ten minutes and rinse off. This may qualify

as one of America's funniest home videos. He now weighs in at 35 pounds and thinks biting is the thing to do during the ten minute intermission—he is an ocelot, after all. The sounds from the shower include growly ocelot-speak and a defensive woman saying *No! No! No!* Could be a scene from *Psycho*? Only cat people would understand.

The last thing I have tried to alleviate his discomfort is to redo his enclosure completely. He now lives with an air-conditioned, HEPA filtered house on a substrate of artificial turf, all of which can be sanitized and pressure washed. He receives daily face washes, Stridex, and eye lube treatments. In a nutshell, he is a very high maintenance guy. But through all of this, Manolo has maintained a great personality. When he is not being a mouthy little son-of-a-gun, he purrs like crazy and loves atten-

tion. It is unfortunate that all of his "issues" have prevented him from going to be an ambassador at the Gulf Breeze Zoo. He would have been perfect for the job. Meanwhile, he has a loving slave for life. Growing up Manolo is not such a bad life! •



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Danielle's Story

By Danielle Finley

I am a new member of FCF. One thing about myself is that I am only eleven years old and I care about the big cats very much.

One day in summer, Sara Comstock took me to the Philadelphia Zoo to see the big cats. We were standing there looking at the big cats at the Big Cat Falls. A tiger passed in front of us and rubbed itself against the glass. A man commented that the tiger was looking at us as if we were all food. I became very upset. Now I am only a kid, but I know that the tiger was only looking for a place to cool down. The tiger rubbed against the glass waiting to interact with us.

There was a conservation movie at the zoo. The movie was saying there is not many of the big cats left. That really upsets me because that means they won't be around much longer. They are losing their habitat in the wild and a lot of people have lost interest in saving the big cats.

I am teaching my classmates about the big cats. I was asked by my teacher to do a report on them. I wrote my report about the big cat conservation and the FCF. My teacher wants us to do more reports as the year continues. I now have a binder that Sara helped me create so I can teach every-

one about the big cats.

I am glad to know that the FCF is helping the big cats. My father and I will be attending the Texas convention, and I hope

to meet you all.

Thank you Sara Comstock for taking me to the zoo and teaching me about the big cats. •



Danielle holds a serval, sort of.

Teaching the Young

By Sara Comstock

Conservation of the world's natural resources, air, water, vegetation, and the animals, will foresee our own future on this planet. But what about the animals? How do they see their future on this planet?

The animals of this world have put their trust in us humans to protect them, to love them, to nurture them, and to conserve them. As the animal numbers dwindle due to human overpopulation and losing their environment, the responsibility of conservation of the animal species has fallen onto humans.

Owning or being owned by an exotic animal is not for everyone. It takes a special breed of person with the dedication, devotion, and commitment. The knowledge that you must attain to keep exotics healthy

and happy is a full time commitment of continued learning.

The conservation of exotic animals has become the responsibility of not only zoos and sanctuaries, but also requires teaching the young about respect for our animal world.

It is the responsibility of exotic animal owners to teach the public about responsible exotic animal ownership. Exotic animal ownership is a hands-on experience. In presentations to day camps, I have found a child is captivated when seeing and touching an animal. Children taught when they are young will become responsible pet owners—and conservationists—for the future.

Children trained to extend justice, kindness, and mercy to animals become more

just, kind, and considerate towards one other. Character training along these lines will result in men and women of broader sympathies, more humane, more law-abiding—in every respect more valuable citizens.

The cultivation of the spirit of kindness to animals is the starting point towards that larger humanity which includes one's fellow of every race and clime. A generation of people trained in these principles will solve their international difficulties as neighbors and not as enemies.

We must as adults, carry on the tradition of education our young people, to be more humane and more compassionate to all animals. Teach them now, as they are our future, our animals' future. •

Notes from Four Great Days in San Diego

By Lynn Culver

The San Diego Zoo and Wildlife Park sponsored the second Annual Zoological Association of America (ZAOA) conference. Four FCF directors, Carol Bohning, JB Anderson, Kevin Chambers, and myself attended. Cat owners were well represented there. Besides us there were 21 other FCF members attending. The general session featured speakers on a wide variety of subjects.

Some of the Speakers

Dr. David Murphy of Lowry Park Zoo elaborated on the zoo's native Florida endangered species breeding and educational programs. He shared some of the difficulties they face with F&W permitting and regulations.

This zoo breeds Key Largo wood rats, red wolves, whooping cranes, and manatees. In talking about all the F&W hoops that must be jumped through with endangered species, he recounted the history of the endangered Florida panther kittens captured back in the early 1990's intended to be founders for a captive breeding program. Lawsuits and a change of plans resulted in them never being bred. Instead, the F&W chose to release wild caught Texas cougars in 1995. That seems to have greatly improved the wild population's genetic impoverishment. Today the panthers have tripled in numbers to nearly 100 individuals.

Mike Mace of the San Diego Wild Animal Park followed with information on raising avian species for reintroduction. This park has raised California condor, Andean condor, and light-footed clapper rail, Guam rail, ground hornbill and successfully released them back into nature. Mace says the secret is to use 'all the tools in the toolbox,' preserve tribal knowledge, develop and sustain expertise, develop protocol and he emphasized, 'publish, publish, publish.'

FCF member Bobby Hartsliel spoke on his Savannah Cheetah Foundation in South Africa, focusing on the educational nature of a Savannah experience. His preserve is home to cheetah and lots of hoof stock species, including rhino and cape buffalo. The impressive Vaal River runs through the property. The surrounding geography is unique. It's the oldest meteorite impact structure in the world, clearly visible to this

day. Amani Walker, one of the high school students that visited his Savannah preserve last summer, gave a glowing personal testimony on his trip. Amani's description made me even more motivated to organize an FCF trip to the Savannah Cheetah Preserve in 2007.

Dr. Larry Killmar, who was just elected to be the next chair of the ZAOA, spoke on antelope species. There is a real shortage of many varieties in AZA zoos after their years and years of careful management. Hoof stock really needs to be housed in larger groups than 'onsies' and 'twosies,' but limited size and high cost of enclosure space in metropolitan zoos means they don't have the room to accommodate large herds. Sustaining populations with small gene pools and limited captive habitat is leaving species vulnerable to catastrophic losses.

Larry shared a tragic story about springbok. A population of just 53 animals was housed in just eight zoos, so in 2005, the Wild Animal Park imported 15 animals at a cost of \$30,000 each. Sadly, all 15 animals had to be euthanized after they developed Yonne's disease.

Larry spoke of other antelope species in trouble: gemsbok was more numerous in the 1970s than they are today, and the bay duiker are gone, and sable antelope numbers are dropping, and the Arabian oryx population has been falling since the 1990s leaving today's population just one-third of the highest level.

Pat Condy gave a sobering report on African conservation. A native South

African himself, today he is the CEO of Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, a drive-through park in Glen Rose, Texas. It features lots of hoof stock species and boasts one of the most successful of cheetah breeding records. Fossil Rim is reportedly going to be the host of next year's ZAOA conference.

Pat shared his behind-the-scenes look at Africa. The Dark Continent's northern countries are Arab/Muslim, and the southern part is black Christian African, and the middle is a mixing zone. It was the northern Muslims who captured and sold the south's black Africans into the slave trade. This history is the source of much tension between the various ethnic and religious groups today.

Human population growth in Africa is rampant. Demography is destiny and most of the national economies cannot keep up and are failing to provide necessary support for their citizens. Poverty is rampant.

The continent's national boundaries were created hundreds of years ago by invaders who did not pay attention to the cultural divide. What this translates into is that of the 54 nations that made up Africa, most have at least two tribes who are traditional enemies within their borders—and these hostilities go back hundreds of years. Countries must govern the dominant tribe and the less dominant tribe in a delicate balancing act.

Starting at about the 1950s, countries once colonized gained self-government and began practicing rampant nativization (affirmative action) causing a brain drain

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out of Africa. Without enough engineers and architects and professionals across all fields of expertise, the infrastructure has suffered; roads, water and power are all crippled.

In eastern Africa all wildlife is government owned and this separation of management has created what Pat referred to as 'poaching by proxy.' Wild animals competing with your livestock motivate you to allow poaching by other tribes entering your land to eliminate the problem.

In southern Africa the laws give landowners ownership of wildlife, with the exception of endangered species. Land and wildlife are seen as a single resource, making misuse of either land or wildlife an impact to the landowner and so this motives good stewardship. Consequently, wildlife conservation has improved.

I was totally amazed to hear Mr. Condy say that southern Africa elephants are overpopulated, causing serious damage to the land and causing growing intolerance. Zimbabwe villagers are given permission to kill elephants that molest villages. According to Pat, 20,000 to 100,000 excess elephants exist. Mr. Condy says there is no need for captive elephants to conserve the species. I found this news very interesting in light of recent debates and animal welfare issues raised by animal rights groups over elephants in zoos and the AZA justification for their exhibits. In fact, while flying to the conference, the USA today issue I was reading had a full page article about the ethics of keeping elephants in AZA zoos.

Pat says in South Africa, much of the dairy farms are being 'rewilded.' Fences are cut and multiple properties are combined and native wildlife is restocked and the bed and breakfast industry has evolved. When land is returned to wildlife, foreign income replaces agriculture as income. Local people get a \$1.00 levy on every tourist night spent at a lodge, and \$1.00 on every animal hunted insuring that the entire community benefits and supports conservancy.

The Zoo and Park

After a day and a half of speakers, we toured the San Diego Zoo which is a feast for the eyes. The cages are all enriched with lots of big tree trunks and rocks and mulch and lush tropical growth. Enclosures are covered with either stainless steel mesh or black coated welded wire allow for great viewing. For cat species they had three of



Clouded leopard at Wild Animal Park

the most gorgeous Siberian lynx, a clouded leopard, fishing cats, Amur and Persian leopards, black jaguar, snow leopard, lion, and tiger.

The climate is such that the zoo can utilize some cage designs that would never stand up to a snow or ice load. Having no fall season, they don't have to deal with leaf litter on their roofs either. So many of the cages were built of heavy posts, and roof beams and rafters were replaced with just a series of cables clamped onto big O-rings by turnbuckles and then hog ringed onto the cables were half inch by three inch welded wire strips. You could never have wire that narrow in a northern climate where ice can build up. It was beautiful there and I loved all the different types of plants. The succulents and the cactus and aloes had more weird forms than I knew existed.

The zoo has guided double-decker tour buses that take you to most exhibits. You need it; it's a big zoo with lots of ups and downs. There's even an outdoor escalator. There is plenty of effort made to enrich the small spaces allotted each species. Giant Pandas from China seem happy; the 6-month old cub was snoozing high atop a pine tree. Of course, I loved the cats. Another exhibit that captured my attention was for a pair of honey badgers that were rolling and playing in the front of their cage in the most adorable manner. We paused for a while in front of a pair of red river hogs as they received a hosing down from their keeper and we watched and listened as he recounted about the likes and dislikes of Sweet Pea and her mate, with as much affection as we do our cats. The keeper gained and kept the attention of a crowd, just like private facilities do with our per-

sonal tours of our collections. I couldn't help but notice that the human/animal interaction grabbed the public's attention. Row after row of very expensive and expertly landscaped and enriched exhibits were often viewed by the public for only for a few moments, as if the super saturation and over stimulation of so many exotic life forms dulls the public's appreciation of them all.

We spent Saturday at San Diego's 1,800-acre Wild Animal Park. It is divided into the walk around part that has close-up exhibits like the one for the meerkats. They were busy digging holes in their dirt, in search of bugs to eat. The park also features impressive natural habitats for species like gorilla and okapi. There is a train that takes you around the many, multi-acre habitats that are home to species like giraffe, elephant, rhino, Mongolian horse, oryx, tiger, lion, cheetah and all kinds of antelope. It was at the park that the general membership meeting was conducted.

Impressions after the ZAOA Conference

I went away with mixed emotions. ZAOA is still fine-tuning its positions and policies and in the case of big cats, I sense that years of no-contact indoctrination of some AZA/ ZAOA members conflicts with the hand-rearing and hands-on approach adopted by many in FCF.

After Pat Quinn, founder of the Gulf Breeze Zoo in Florida, opened the conference with a recitation of the Rotary Club motto, Pat played the recent 20/20 TV segment that featured animal rights undercover video shot at the Siberian Tiger Foundation last summer. The TV show began with an interview of the parents of Haley Hilderbrand, the Kansas teenager killed by a tiger

during a photo shoot, and followed with an interview of the husband of a woman who was badly bitten when she stuck her arm in a tiger cage at private zoo in 1999. The 20/20 show was clearly aimed at fueling passage of Haley's Act in Congress. It was a thought provoking mix that used graphic photos of tiger inflicted injuries to help pound home the message that large cats are dangerous. Afterwards I asked Pat for a few minutes to speak to the attendees and provide additional background information on that tiger inflicted injury, but Pat didn't want to spend any time on discussions. I feel his decision to avoid additional discussion was a missed opportunity to further enlighten everyone on safety risks in public exhibition and the unfortunate side of human behavior to disobey signs and verbal warnings and take risks. Quite ironically, just a week after the ZAOA conference concluded, the Gulf Breeze Zoo was in the news. A leopard attacked a keeper who was standing too close to the enclosure, inflicting serious bites and lacerations to her hand and arm. And then the next day, Gulf Breeze Zoo experienced a double escape. Two cougars escaped and had to be sedated and recaptured.

I question whether some of the attendees understand the FCF and the private sector's approach using hand-raised, affection-trained husbandry with exotic cats. FCF magazines feature photos of bottle-feeding adult tiger, hugging adult lynx, sleeping with serval. Our members praise Steve Irwin's approach to close encounters with wildlife. For example, one zoo owner attendee of the conference that I signed up as a new member of the FCF while I was in San Diego tried to make a big issue to the ZAOA board members about an article published in the Sept/Oct FCF magazine. One of our members wrote about her firsthand experience attending two training schools. This zoo owner mistakenly assumed that by publishing this article the FCF was supporting the Siberian Tiger Foundation. Fortunately, during discussions with several ZAOA members about this alarmist's attitude, we were gratified to learn that others better understand and support the overall objectives of the FCF to provide information about feline conservation and captive husbandry, even when the topic is controversial.

Another issue that I think needs to be addressed is sanctuaries. There is reluctance by ZAOA to welcome the sanctuaries into their accreditation program. In the case of large cat species, sanctuaries hold the mother load of the population and form a vital role in species conservation. This reality is a direct result of legal climate surrounding private ownership of large carnivores and the increasing loss of viable habitat and the burden of meeting the high costs of maintaining captive habitat for tigers and other big cat species. Non-breeding, lifetime refuges are critical to the species survival and I think they should not be penalized or excluded from ZAOA's conservation and accreditation programs.

Awareness of FCF is growing and there is a definite benefit to the cats if both organizations can work cooperatively on programs. FCF has much to be proud of, a first-class publication

that has steadily grown in size and quality, a conservation program that has generated funds and has awarded research grants giving FCF a strong conservation track record, and a husbandry course developed by FCF for feline keepers that has graduated over 450 students, receiving praises from regulatory agencies. FCF continues to get our positions and views out to the media.

I also noted some historic similarities between ZAOA and the FCF. ZAOA was originally started about 18 years ago as the International Zooculturist Society. Two years ago it reinvented itself as the ZAOA by combining its mission and board of directors with that of the United Zoological Association, another new organization formed to accredit and serve the needs of zoos. This formula seems to have fueled new interest, as ZAOA is experiencing rapid growth and membership has increased 60% this past year. Considering that FCF members made up about 30% of the people attending, I would say that advertising in the FCF magazine has benefited ZAOA.

ZAOA strives to provide a viable option for zoos and private breeders that do not

subscribe to the AZA controlled socialistic dictatorship, and invites zoos that are also AZA members to join as well. In fact ZAOA professional members just elected their new board of directors and Pat Quinn, present ZAOA chair, will step down to hand over the reigns to the newly elected chair Larry Killmar, of the AZA accredited San Diego Zoo. This change will definitely draw attention to ZAOA from all sides, both positive and negative. The politics of such a dual allegiance to two competing organizations will be interesting to watch as it plays out and ZAOA works through its growing pains.



Weird trees at Wild Animal Park

ZAOA needs a lot of volunteer service from their members to reach their goals. High rollers and large zoos that desire recognition are going to have to roll up their sleeves and dig into their pockets. But if ZAOA can zero in on some conservation goals

and partner with the FCF to inventory and track and address captive husbandry issues relevant to feline species, I believe that the cats will benefit.

ZAOA is focusing upon gaining parity with the AZA, believing that if they can win federal exemptions in upcoming legislation, then states will follow suit for them. How does a relatively unknown organization get on the fast track and accomplish such a lofty goal? ZAOA has hired an attorney with extensive experience in zoological matters and lots of influence with USDA, USDI, and Congress. ZAOA hopes that this high-paid and high profile delivery man will be just what they need to get doors to open and get people to listen to their message.

Another serious player has entered the legislative playing field, attempting to exert influence and make changes to suit their accredited members. Whether they will succeed is unknown, but the ensuing debate over private organizations gaining special treatment by legislators is sure to take up time and energy and slow down the animal rights driven freight train that has been barreling down on us all lately. •

Experiencing the FCF Safari Raffle Prize

Or what I did on my southern hemispheric summer vacation

By Mike Frieze

On February 12, 2006 Indiana Senator John Waterman pulled my name out of the barrel and again FCF managed to change my life for the better. I thought the raffle prize was one of the best I have ever heard of and I bought plenty of tickets. Although I never expected to win, I knew the money was going to support FCF's conservation programs, so this made me feel more generous about losing.

The prize was six nights at Zulu Nyala, a luxury photo safari place in South Africa plus the astonishing extra of international airfare to get there. It took me what seemed like forever to make all my arrangements, yet the travel agent handling the prize was ever-so-patient.

At the crack of dawn on October 30, Nancy De Fusco and I arrived at Los Angeles Airport for our first leg to Washington DC where we would pick up the South African Airways flight to Johannesburg, South Africa.

This DC to Johannesburg flight is remarkable because it is the second longest non-stop flight anywhere: over 14 hours. In fact it is so long that the Airbus A340-600 cannot make the return flight non-stop; the return flight makes a fuel stop at the far western tip of Africa in Dakar, Senegal,

In a twisted sense of cruelty, South African Airways provided economy-class passengers with diagrams showing how nice the seating was up in business class. After about ten hours we were feeling a bit covetous.

Due to the airline changing the scheduling of the international flight, we had to spend the night in Johannesburg, which turned out to be a pleasant opportunity to recharge before arriving at the game lodge. Not so pleasant was the fact that the airline managed to misplace three of our four bags. The airline assured us that "they knew exactly where our bags were." This made me wonder why they didn't anticipate that we might want them here in Johannesburg.

The hotel was somewhat austere but it fronted on a nice canal which carried an occasional water-skier. Since our baggage was lost, we asked the hotel people if there was nearby shopping but they warned us

that it was unsafe to walk there this time of day. This time of day was 4:00pm and this was their summer.

The next morning we caught a de Havilland Dash 8 puddle-jumping turboprop to Richards Bay. Being a frequent flyer of domestic routes I was surprised they served lunch on this 1½ hour flight.

The Richards Bay airport gave us our first whiff of a wild and third-world country. It looked more like a train station than an airport. And there was nobody there to pick us up. Seems that our travel agent failed to tell Zulu Nyala about our new arrival time.

We called Zulu Nyala and since they were about 70 miles away, we settled in for what promised to be a two-hour wait. But within minutes a man showed up at the airport, asking for us and carrying some of our bags to the car. The man carrying our bags? Trevor Shaw, the owner of Zulu Nyala! Trevor's real business is diamond sales and he commutes between Johannesburg and Richards Bay on a regular basis. He was on our flight and Zulu Nyala had dispatched a driver to pick him up. So with him, we embarked on our first mission in South Africa. Might it be tracking a giraffe or wildebeest? No, we instead drove to a mall to find a printer cartridge.

After a scenic drive through endless blue gum tree plantations, we passed through the closest town, Hluhluwe (inexplicably pronounced Shlu-shlu-wee) and after a few miles down a dirt road, arrived at Zulu Nyala Game Lodge. We were ushered to our air-conditioned yet thatch-roofed room adjacent to a picturesque swimming pool. The room was typical sized but the slate-tiled bathroom was just as big as the rest of the room.

Our days settled into a comfortable routine: Going on a two-hour game drive at 6:00am, then breakfast, relaxing, lunch, another two-hour game drive, and then dinner. It felt like a summer camp for big kids. We were paired up with three other couples for meals and game drives. We almost always had the same driver, Johnny, which made for a lot of variety on the drives. You see, Zulu Nyala spans about 5,000 acres, but our driver tried to use new roads all the time so we rarely saw the same sight twice.

Our driver also seemed to be more aggressive at tracking the animals than the other drivers. If the animals were not near the road, Johnny would blaze a trail knocking down whatever poor green thing that might get in the way.

Most of the safari vehicles were newish Toyota pickup trucks with three rows of



Johnny, Nancy, and Mikey on the edge of a vast African wilderness.

seats mounted in their beds. Each row could accommodate three passengers and an additional passenger could sit by the driver. Most of the time our vehicle was carrying only six passengers so this made for a comfortable drive with plenty of room to swing a ca—um—camera.

Johnny drove the scruffiest of the safari vehicles. It was an old Land Rover with many a scar. Johnny said he preferred it because management never seemed to notice the new scratches and dents. Those scratches translated to an exciting ride for us.

Since game drives occur so regularly at Zulu Nyala, some animals which might be skittish or aggressive have learned to ignore the game vehicles. This was especially helpful for sneaking up to get a close look at the cape buffalo. The cape buffalo kill quite a few people every year by trampling or goring them. Typically people get killed when they forget that behind their benign cow-like appearances, cape buffalo are

1,500 pounds of trampling tenderloin.

Johnny drove right up to the outskirts of the buffalo herd. The big males kept a close eye on us while the females would ignore us. We even saw a little calf nursing.

We also put a few scratches on the Land Rover following two adult elephants and a baby into a stand of trees. The mom was not amused. She started breaking tree branches for no other apparent reason than a show of strength. Two of them walked within a trunk's length of our vehicle. Oddly, because they were so close, we could not see them. The view was blocked with a vast wall of gray.

Probably the scariest animal we saw was the black rhino. These rhino have poor eyesight, but good hearing and sense of smell. And they have incredibly bad attitudes. Johnny spotted the one black rhino at the top of the hill far from any roads. Not satisfied to give us a look through binoculars, he blazed a trail towards the rhino until we were just 100 yards away. Now 100 yards



Nancy captures warthogs on film just 100 feet from our room.

might seem like a distance but even then the black rhino was getting agitated and grunting in disapproval. As we edged a little closer, the rhino got a sense that somebody was nearby and on-foot. The rhino charged! Going less than ten feet, the rhino plowed into a bush. Johnny, sensing that we perhaps had worn out what little welcome we had, decided to take off because the rhino was on the verge of charging us. The terrain was very difficult and Johnny had difficulty getting the land Rover moving so he stomped the throttle and slipped the clutch and within moments we were on our way to safety, trailing a cloud of sacrificial clutch smoke.

One animal that I found impossible to spot was the giraffe. Johnny could usually spot them but I never saw them without him pointing them out to me. One would think the giraffe would be the easiest animal to find but they certainly were not.

This trip has one glaring omission for a FCF raffle prize: no cats! Oh, the Zulu Nyala people say that there could be leopards there, but the leopards would be required to jump an electric fence to get inside. (This omission would later be remedied when I visited the cheetah at the Savannah Cheetah Foundation.)

As I mentioned, Johnny injected some welcome randomness into our game drives. One evening he drove us to the top of a remote escarpment overlooking a vast African wilderness. We sipped wine as we

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watched the sun set, painting the Africa before us in a range of reds and purples. It was a moments like this that reminded us that we were in a truly magical place.

On the fourth day there, we took a side trip to the Tembe Elephant Park which is on the outskirts of Mozambique. They say the largest elephants in Africa can be found here. The main attractions here were two blinds which were set up outside of established elephant watering holes.

As I was looking at the scenery outside the blind, it all seemed oddly familiar. Then I discovered that there was a webcam attached to the blind and I had randomly visited it months before while researching Africa. I never made the connection that what I was viewing on this African webcam I would some day see in person.

We saw plenty at this first blind. There were a half dozen elephants and many kinds of hoofstock including kudu and wildebeest. We saw the elephants spraying water or sand on their backs. It was not obvious why certain elephants preferred sand over water. We enjoyed a picnic lunch



View from just outside our room. Warthog habitat at lower left.

as we watched the elephants very quietly at this watering hole until they wandered

away.

We saw not much of interest at the second blind except for some warthogs which magically blended into the scenery. We had been staring at them for 15 minutes before we realized they were there.

Even though the Tembe elephants are in a preserve, they are still poached. We saw a band of armed guards walking on foot in search of poachers. To our uninitiated eye, these guards looked like poachers themselves.

On our way along a remote and sandy trail, our path was blocked by some fallen trees. My fertile imagination kicked in and I wondered if the poachers had felled the trees for some purpose. We weighed our option of retracing our travels via the trail we came in on or trying to remove the tree. The tree was too large for all of us to move so we broke off some branches which allowed our vehicles to literally scrape by. I doubt the Zulu Nyala management was pleased by the new scars on their vehicles.

The end of our six night stay at Zulu Nyala was bittersweet. Although I did not want to leave, the lure of meeting the cheetah at Bobby Hartslief's Savannah Cheetah Foundation made me excited to be traveling again. At dawn, we caught the van down the hill from Zulu Nyala, catching a brief glance at the animals that would no longer to be a part of our daily routine. •

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Another Raffle Prize Perspective

By Nancy De Fusco

How did I get so lucky? I'm not rich, I don't have a cool job, I don't know anyone famous, but I *do* know Mike Friese. I met Mike in 1993. One of my earliest memories of him is a conversation we had regarding our mutual love of cats. This was the start of a permanent bond between us. Who could have guessed that thirteen years later we would be in South Africa together bonding *with* cheetahs?

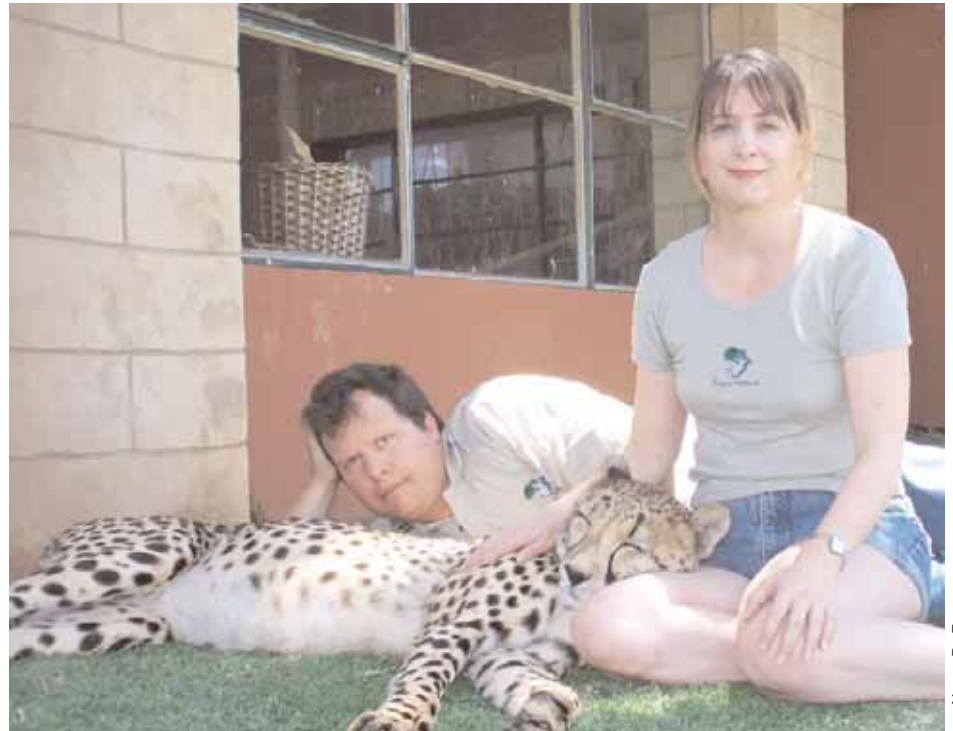
Mike won a trip for two for six nights at Zulu Nyala, in a raffle sponsored by FCF. When Bobby Hartsliet heard the news, he suggested that Mike visit his cheetah ranch, while in the area. Mike chose me as his companion.

My loves of photography and animals had inspired my life-long dream to go on a photo safari in Africa. This trip by far exceeded my expectations. It was an amazing experience! We came so close to such incredible animals in their natural habitats during our game drives that they often took on a surrealistic feeling. At Zulu Nyala, some of the animals came right into the grounds of the game lodge. The highlight of my trip, though, was the time I spent with the cheetahs! Even in my wildest dreams, I had never imagined not only having the opportunity to photograph and pet cheetahs, but that I'd have the chance to form relationships with them.

There were fourteen cheetahs residing at the ranch. We were able to visit three of them in their enclosure on a daily basis.

I have owned domestic cats for half my life. I found that my understanding and love of them was very helpful to me in knowing how to relate to the cheetahs.

My three new friends were 18 month-old



Nancy and Mike lounge with Nala

litter mates. First there was Jemima. She was the first of the three to come up to me on her own. She was typically quite moody. Some days she would lick my hand, purr, and lay her head in my lap. Other days, she would curl her upper lip when she would see me approach. On those days, I would heed her warning and leave her alone. She was, after all, a cat and I knew I had to respect her right to be aloof.

Next was the boy, Nikita. He was always friendly. He loved to purr, lick my hands and kiss my face. Once again, though, I had to understand that he was a cat, and therefore things must be done *his* way. For instance, when I first met him, I attempted to touch his paw. He strongly objected to that. Later, once we had become friends, he would sometimes put his paws in my lap. When he would do that, I had his permission to play with them. As with any cat, as long as it was *his* idea, it was okay.

Then there was Nala. She was my favorite. We had such a special bond between us, that she would get jealous when she would catch me petting her sib-

lings. One day, I was fawning over Nikita and Nala came up and let me know in no uncertain terms that my attention and affection must now be directed towards *her*! Naturally, I complied. I would never even think to try to place Nala's head on my lap, but I would sit next to her, wait patiently and eventually my lap would become her pillow.

One thing I noticed about the cheetahs was their extreme laziness. When they were resting and wanted to change positions, they couldn't even be bothered to stand up. They would just roll over on their backs, from side to side.

As sweet as the cheetahs were, I always had to keep in mind that they were still dangerous, wild animals. I learned that lesson the hard way. Every time I would turn my back on them, they would steal my camera!

I am very grateful to FCF for providing the perfect prize for their raffle. I am also grateful to the Savannah Cheetah Foundation for their hospitality.

If you are planning a trip for the adventure of a lifetime, I highly recommend that you visit the Savannah. When you do, please give Nala a kiss for me and tell her I will always treasure our special friendship!•

Nancy De Fusco

Adventure at the Savannah Cheetah Foundation

By Mike Friese

The May/June 2006 issue of the FCF Journal featured a remarkable story of the Savannah, a private game preserve in South Africa that had successfully established a cheetah breeding program. The owner of the Savannah, Bobby Hartslief, had bought a single cheetah at an auction. He notified the Savannah's manager, Pieter Kemp, that he needed infrastructure to house the cheetah—and fast. One thing led to another and the Savannah found itself with the unique problem of trying to find homes for many new-bloodline cheetah.

One of the more surprising things about the Savannah is this amazing place is accessible to the public. Over half the cheetah there crave human interaction so humans visiting the compound does not disrupt their routine. (You can visit too! See web address at end of article.) Since the Savannah is just an hour's drive from Johannesburg Airport—and we were going to be there anyway—it was an obvious choice to extend our trip by ten days to visit the Savannah.

This trip would be the culmination of a 20-year quest for me. As I wrote in the Jan/Feb 2006 FCF Journal, in the mid-1980s I became intrigued that cheetah were so tractable, they might make good companions for humans. Indeed through the millennia, cheetah have been kept as pets by kings and commoners. Finally, this commoner would get to pet a cheetah.

We spotted Pieter Kemp the very moment we stepped into the lobby Johannesburg Airport. He was easy to recognize. He was wearing the same hat and smile that

appeared on the front cover of the May/June 2006 issue... but no cheetah.

If I had to point to one theme of the Savannah, it would be hospitality. Pieter immediately gave us a sample of the Savannah hospitality by suggesting we stop, relax, and fetch a cup of latte right there in the airport. After the rush-rush of the morning, I welcomed this little break. This also gave Pieter an opportunity to introduce us to the Savannah.

Soon we were on our way south to Free State via a modern highway system. Those roads trickled to two lane roads and finally to a ten-mile drive over dirt roads. At the final turn, there is indeed an official government signpost pointing the way to the Savannah. A half mile up the road, we reached the guard post and worker's barracks. Pieter pushed a garage door-style opener and the gates slid open. The first thing we saw inside the Savannah was a sign warning "Speed limit 20 kph, Only cheetahs allowed to exceed speed limit." Indeed!

After we dropped our bags at the lodge, one of the first things we did is visit the cheetah. At the time of our visit, the Savannah had 14 cheetah living in about eight gigantic enclosures. There were four older adults, Penny, Mufasa, Savimbi, and most appropriately, Savannah. And there was an 18 year-old matriarch, Vicky. The "baby" cheetahs were 11 month-old Tess, Ruby, Rommel, Charlie, Matt, Phil. Ah, Phil. It does not sound like a cheetah name to me but with this many cheetahs, it's no minor task to come up with unique names. The



Pieter Kemp

Mike and Nikita

most prominent cheetahs were the three 18 month-old outreach cats, Nikita (M), Nala (F), and Jemima (F). These three would become our daily companions.

Since it was the end of the day, the cheetah had already been ushered into their overnight enclosure, so Pieter took us directly there with some other tourists.



Cheetah breeding compound and Pieter and Estelle's house is on left. Lodge/tent area is on right. In between are cheetah enclosures which are barely visible on this photo. Vaal River in background.



The first of two giraffe relocations. The giraffe were moved from one game ranch to another.

When we stepped into the enclosure, the cheetah approached us for some scratching. After petting them for a short while, I sat on the ground and the big male, Nikita, sauntered over to me. Not really knowing what he was about to do, I slow blinked him and he flopped down on my lap! Pieter expressed surprise at that behavior as he had never observed it before. (I am told Nikita flopped on Judy Berens lap a couple weeks prior.)

Visiting the cheetah became a regular pastime of ours. Sometimes we would interact with them, sometimes we would just sit among them as they napped. This close interaction allowed us to discover much about cheetah that you can't from books, TV, or even a zoo.

Some things we learned:

- Cheetah lick you and each other to show affection. As expected their tongues are rougher than those of domestics. If they lick your arm, it's barely tolerable. After about ten licks they will catch a bit of your skin with their tongue and scratch you. I suspect if you let them do this long enough, they would get down to your bones. It is best to let them lick your palms. When you scratch them, they like it best when you simulate another cheetah licking by using a similar speed and stroke.

- Cheetah's tails are flat so they can be whipped from side to side. You could learn that in a book. But that the book would not tell you is the first one-third of their tail is round, then most of their tail is flat—actually oval—and the tip of the tail is round again.

- Most people know that cheetah's claws are not retractable. At the Savannah, you'd learn that though the claws might not be retractable, they can be extended further. Also their claws are sort of dull like the rear claws of a domestic cat but not blunt like a dog's. We could examine and manipulate the cheetah's paws when they placed their paws on us. They did not tolerate having their paws touched at other times.

- Cheetah are extremely lazy. I brought a video camera but it was a challenge to see the cheetah in action. Even when they want to change sides while sleeping, they won't get up to reposition themselves. They just

roll over.

- Cheetah aren't very vocal but they will chirp at perceived prey. The youngsters chirped at each other while at play and to get our attention for scratches.

- It doesn't take much to get a cheetah to purr. Just a kind word or a scratch will do it.

- Cheetah like to play with balls but they tire easily. After just a few minutes of running, they flop on their sides panting. After cheetahs kill in the wild, they do the same thing.

Why the breeding success at the Savannah? I don't have many details, as the recipe for the cheetah breeding success understandably is something the Savannah Cheetah Foundation keeps to themselves. I think a significant key is Pieter's background. He was born on a farm. He grew up on a farm. He worked on a farm. And he was farming when Bobby Hartsliet hired him to manage the Savannah. You see, Pieter has animal husbandry in his blood. After being around it all his life, he just knows how to breed and successfully raise any animal. This expertise somehow transfers to the cheetah.

Another important component is Pieter's wife, Estelle. She gives the baby cheetah almost 24 hour interaction. In fact Pieter and Estelle have built a special apartment connected with the cheetah compound so they can give young cheetah intense care

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Estelle also oversees the lodge staff. The staff consists of three ladies from the nearby town of Parys. The staff performs all the chores one would expect in a hotel. The meals were delicious and varied, though one recurring item at the breakfasts were a toast somewhat reminiscent of a grilled cheese sandwich smashed flat. Mmmm.

There was much more activity at the Savannah than I expected. Although they did not host overnight guests except for us those ten days, several groups came by for game drives, river rafting, luncheons, and of course, cheetah encounters. It was fun to watch people's reactions to the cheetah. Most people were very excited, some were cautious, and a few would not touch the cheetah.

I did not expect game drives at the Savannah, but indeed their 2,500 acres are stocked with giraffe, white rhino, zebra, cape buffalo, and an incredible array of hoof-stock. The many game drive roads around the Savannah are helpfully labeled with street signs bearing the names of some of the animals you might encounter along that street. Even with the street signs' help, I managed to find the wily giraffe only once on the entire ten days.

There are no cheetah running free in the Savannah, though that is planned. An agreement has been reached for the seven adjacent farms to remove enough fences so that the cheetah can roam over 74,000 acres. I think it will be exciting to encounter the cheetah on a game drive.

My trip to the Savannah was to be a working vacation though I did not have to perform many of the tasks that I would have expected. The Savannah's day staff of ten people take care of most everything including picking up the cheetah feces. The staff was so diligent about this that near the end of my stay, I was starting to worry that I would never see a cheetah poop. So, one day I went to the cheetah enclosures before the staff arrived at 7:00.

Some projects I helped with included feeding a sick cape buffalo which was penned-up in a remote area, repairing a fence which had been trampled—twice—by the rhino, cutting up a cow donated by the local slaughter house, and constructing a giant wedding-sized meeting tent.

It was not all work either. The Savannah is located entirely within the impact crater

of the world's largest known meteor impact. The impact was so violent that it pushed up entire mountains on one edge of the site. Pieter arranged so we could join a private tour group going on a drive up to the top edge of one of those mountains at the Vredefort Koepel Meteor Impact Site. The end of the drive found us at the top of one such mountain with glasses of wine in hand watching the sun dip to the horizon.

The drive up was so beautiful and it was just a few miles that I decided it might be a nice adventure to walk down. After securing permission from the tour guide, I started down. Problem was, I had not thought this completely through. After sunset, comes darkness. And darkness on a moonless night in the middle of the dark continent is very dark. Plus I then remembered the guides talking about a leopard kill



Pieter Kemp

14 cheetah eat a lot of meat. Mike helps carve up a cow carcass.

being spotted in a tree just four miles from where we were. And leopards have been hunting humans for millennia. And I was walking alone.

I started to regret my decision and wondering how to best preserve my life. Yell?



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That might attract the leopard. Be very quiet? Leopards have better ears than humans. My solution? Flash my camera in all directions. After each picture of nothing I took, I looked at the picture to see if I could distinguish eyes. The FCF web site ran a story making it sound like the leopard was chasing me. I never saw the leopard but I can't be sure if the leopard never saw me.

One day Pieter and I took a four-hour car trip to meet some researchers from San Diego Wild Animal Park, Cincinnati Zoo, and a zoo in Germany. The researchers were situated near Kimberly where they were doing research on the black footed cat, an endangered animal which is the smallest of all cats: about five pounds full grown. They were launching a poster campaign to increase awareness of the black footed cat among the residents of the area. Pieter brought with him a pelt from a road-kill black footed cat he found a few months prior. The team said they would do DNA research on it to find out how closely the population near Kimberly was related to the population near the Savannah.

The Savannah is roughly rectangular in shape and it is bounded on two sides by the Vaal River. Tour groups often go to the Savannah for a river rafting adventure. One day I helped move ten inflatable kayaks to the edge of an adjacent canal for a tour group. Pieter told me often these groups typically have a few people who panic at the last moment and a kayak might become available. Fortunately, that's what happened and we got to run some Class I rapids and see some of the islands along the river which are part of the Savanna's property.

Along the river inside the Savannah's fence are some amazing ruins of a small farming community. These adobe ruins take on the bright red of the mud used to make them. Looking carefully, you might notice certain walls have Mayan-style decorations embossed on them. All the buildings were small but they are arranged as a small village. You could see evidence of their former thatched roofs collapsed into them. Although their history is not completely certain, they probably date to the late 1800s. Pieter tells me that some school groups will be taking on the chore of restoring these huts. The plan is to make it a primitive but functional village where



Nancy De Fusco

school groups can go to camp.

If you visit the Savannah today, you won't have to stay in an adobe shack. There's three guest rooms in the lodge. Each of them is themed. Of course, I stayed in the Cheetah Room. The lodge is also where you would eat your meals either in the indoor dining room or the outdoor covered veranda (under construction when I visited.) The lodge also includes a TV room with satellite, a library room, and a meeting/computer room. The computer room has an always-on internet connected computer perfect for picking up emails.

The boma are round, free-standing concrete guest rooms with thatched roofs and integral bathrooms. They are just a few steps from the pool. This is normally where you'd stay if you were volunteering at the Savannah. There are two boma.

The final and I think most intriguing accommodations aren't even rooms at all; they're tents. Five tents are situated around a watering hole. These tents are located several hundred feet from the lodge along a lighted and curvy boardwalk. The tents are not what you'd expect. Each one has three canvas roofs to keep them cool in the summer and each have a private connected bathroom made of either stone or wood. Zippers are everywhere to open windows or even holes in the roof. Each tent also features a wood balcony out front where one can sit in chairs and watch the wildlife go by. Inside there's real furniture. I stayed my last night in a tent and it was a wonderful experience. I did not see much wildlife but the lighting along the boardwalk

between the tents gave the place a surreal look and the lullaby provided by all the little critters out there was unforgettable.

There is talk of an FCF-organized trip to Africa and that trip will certainly include a stay at the Savannah. Groups of up to 20 people can be accommodated. If you can't wait, trips there can be made at any time.

The Savannah is a place I will never forget. My sincere thanks go out to Bobby Hartsliel, Pieter and Estelle Kemp, and FCF for making it possible for me to realize my 20 year dream. •

<http://www.thesavannah.org>



Black-footed cat awareness poster

Information Warfare

Are Animal Rights Groups Winning the Info-War Over Exotic Animal Ownership?

By Scott Shoemaker, new FCF member

The quick answer is yes, for now at least. How do they do it? Why is it happening? What can be done about it?

How do they do it?

I've been a recent arrival to the exotic animal community and it astonished me that not many are out there challenging the information being spouted by Animal Rights (AR) activist groups. Especially since the FBI considers some as terrorist organizations or supporting those that conduct terrorist acts.

First, how they do it? They take advantage of every opportunity and any media possible. As soon as an incident occurs, whether an animal attack, injury, accident, confiscation, or anything remotely associated with an exotic animal (captive or wild), they use it. AR groups immediately put out a press release, which vaguely references the actual incident. The typical press release is full of misinformation, half-truths, and some outright lies, along with the issues of public safety and maltreatment of animals. They then push their agenda of bans on exotic animals.

These groups continue with getting their so-called "experts" air time and press on whoever will take them. Next are the letters to the editors, writing campaigns, and finding a legislator gullible enough to put forth legislation that has been written by the AR groups themselves.

If no incidents are occurring for them to take advantage of, they invent them. Don't you find it odd that often some loose exotic animal is cited in a state that has laws up for consideration? Of course, no exotic animal is ever found, not even evidence of it, but the damage and the opportunity has already been created. If you pay attention, you'll see the trend.

Next is the use of people that have been associated with exotics in some form, whether it be a former neighbor, a sanctuary owner, zoo personnel, former trainer, or owner to push their agenda. It has the appearance as coming from someone with experience and knowledge with these animals... so the press assumes what they say must carry some merit to it. (Usually these

people are members of the AR group or have their own agenda.)

Other methods used to create attention are demonstrations, frivolous law suits, and of course, terrorism and harassment. They also attempt to get video footage of animal abuse, even from outside the United States. The footage is well edited and narrated to show the story they want to tell, but it is rarely the whole story. The narration, what is on the screen, what and how it actually happened/appears don't match up. A person that doesn't know any better will take it in, never questioning what the truth really is.

AR groups are clever at coming out and expounding that they are against having captive large exotics (lions, tigers, bears, etc), but what they barely whisper is that they are against any animal in captivity for any reason. They don't advertise their full mission, only the portion that gets the attention to give them a window of opportunity for submitting their ban legislation. They say it is for banning the large exotics, but in

the fine print is the fact that they are attempting to ban as many animals as possible that they feel they can get away with before the public notices how ridiculous it is in banning certain animals in the name of public safety. They are pushing bans and regulation the same way a realtor sells a gated community; it gives the appearance of being a secure and safer place to live, but it is just eyewash and in actuality you are not any more secure or safer, you just feel you are.

Why is it happening?

Could it be that exotic owners have better things to do than fight AR legislation, like take care of their animals? That would be over simplistic view, but part of it rings true. No one really wants to spend the time. The AR groups know this and exploit it.

The major AR groups are well funded and financed, hence they have staffs working issues and hire the talent they need. They don't spend money caring for any animals or lift one finger to increase their wild



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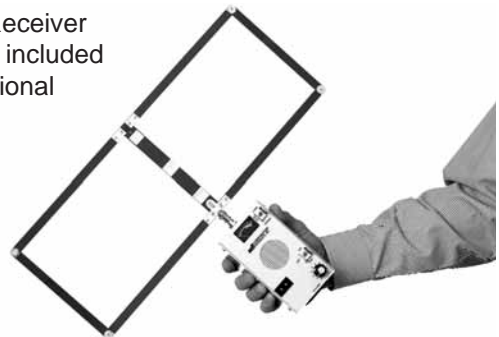
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habitats. Most all their efforts (and money) go into shaping public opinion and lobbying for legislation.

The campaigns for bans are usually focused in the urban areas versus rural. This is because they can prey on people's fear of the unknown. People that grow up in cities are not exposed to nature, wild animals, or have a solid foundation in dealing with any kind of animal. Hence they are easily swayed in banning something they don't understand.

Exotic owners of all types—this include sanctuaries—are a fragmented group that bicker amongst themselves. Arguing who is ethical, who is just after money, what qualifies as a true sanctuary, who gets exempted from bans, which person knows what they are doing, what qualifies as a responsible owner. It won't matter: the AR agenda wants to ban all animals in captivity. It is just a matter of time. They go after the individual owners first, then the entertainers, and then the sanctuaries; they will eventually get to the creatures in your fish tank.

Exotic owners can't seem to pool their talent in fighting legislation or in the future submitting their own legislation to repeal bans. The exotic community is not soliciting assistance from common pet owners (it would make sense, since their pets/animals are next), cattle industry, the NRA, heck anyone having anything to do with animals. The AR groups and agenda goes after all of them.

What can be done about it?

First realize that the world of news reporting has changed. With the advent of 24-hour news channels, cable, and the internet, news is no longer just being reported. The news media is trying to expound on the stories, adding in commentary, seeking the emotional button, even sensationalizing the story (sounding worse than it really is) to attract more viewers or readers.

Media outlets are seeking to put people in front of the camera or to quote, just to add to the commentary. AR promoters are only too willing, actually contacting the media first to get their message out to plant the idea that having captive animals is a public safety issue and private ownership is bad. They say what they want you to believe, not what they know or can prove.

We need to challenge what these spokespeople say. Remember they speak in half-

truths and rarely have any concrete data backing up what they say. They will mention estimated numbers but how did they come to that estimate? They will take world-wide numbers and make them sound like they are for the United States only, such as the number of big cat related deaths and follow immediately with the estimate of how many are in the US.

The AR message is full of emotion and shy on facts. They say exotic animals should not be kept in captivity (actually any animal), but why not? They feel that is wrong, they imagine the animals are mistreated, animals are trained with harsh means and severe punishment, animals live in inhumane conditions, kept in cellars, garages, and backyards. Well if all that were true, wouldn't there be more abuse cases and confiscations? They take the example of one bad owner and portray all owners as such. If that were the case, you could say that one case of child abuse by a parent means that all parents are bad, so lets ban children to prevent this from happening.

Many exotic animal related groups are slow to respond, whether out of fear from AR people/groups, unsure what they can do, or feel that someone else will get it done. No one is putting up a challenge or confronting those putting out the misinformation, yet email lists are full with people complaining and nothing else.

Private ownership groups should be contacting the media prior to any incident. Offer a counterpoint to the AR sensationalism. Educate the media and public about the facts regarding captive animals in private hands. Expose the slight of hand of what is going on. Have their own experts, vets, trainers, and owners available for the media.

Owner's groups should be proactive in regards to legislation. Why wait until legislation is introduced that will ban private ownership? Submit legislation that addresses public safety issues, caging requirements, feeding—things that responsible owners already do. Where there's already a ban in place, put forth legislation to repeal or modify bans.

Exotic groups need to get over their fear of the press, afraid that they will twist the story into something against private ownership. I'm not saying trust all elements of the press. Always record what is said or shown just in case they do try to twist or cut it into something unfavorable.

Pretty soon it will take a court case to decide if the bans/regulations are going too far. Who is going to fund this? Someone should start thinking of way to challenge these laws and getting a fund ready to fight it.

Some so-called sanctuaries are not helping; they actually blame private owners for the problem when in fact 80% or more their rescues are from licensed/regulated facilities. At least one sanctuary has gone so far as to make up horror stories of how the animals came to them, when in fact they actually

Private ownership groups should be contacting the media prior to any incident. Offer a counterpoint to the AR sensationalism.

bought them and bred them. They fabricate and publicize that private owners are at fault. This is being done for the money; they are deceiving the public for donations. Then they come out in support of bans, because if no one

else has exotic animals, everyone will come to them to see them and, of course, donate or spend their money in the gift shop. Never mind that once bans are approved, sanctuaries claim to be full. That is, unless the displaced animals are part of a high profile, media frenzy case, then the sanctuaries fight over who gets them, because where the animal goes, so does the money.

Another issue is to expose the AR complete agenda, show that they are after ranching, cattle, horses, and eating of any meat including fish. Show that exotic captive animals bans is just the tip of the iceberg, that they want to ban all pets and livestock and there is no middle ground for them.

Last, educate the general public about exotic animals in captivity. That yes, just like any animal, it comes with risk. Show them what responsible ownership means and its effect on safety. Don't wait for the public to come to you, actively go after the public in general. If you soothe their fears, it will become a non-issue. •

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Exhibit Design and Safety Precautions for Captive Felids

By William K. Baker, Jr., Curator
Panthera Research

The management of felids in captivity is one of the most challenging and potentially dangerous aspects of the zoological profession. Conversely, it's also one of the most rewarding facets of my career. The demands of husbandry and management are far outweighed by the rewards. For me, managing carnivores is what it's all about. While there are many factors that come into play for captive felid husbandry, whenever I am consulting for clients, inevitably I come back to the basic tenants of daily management: primary and secondary containment, exhibit design, locks, and emergency supplies when it comes to safety.

By taking a proactive stance towards the front end of the components of exhibit development and management, the vast majority of safety related problems can be avoided. Prevention continues to be a mainstay of addressing safety issues before they become crisis management events. The best way to approach all of this is to look at the situation progressively through the development process. In the end, not only are most of your safety issues addressed, but also your daily husbandry and exhibit management becomes far more time efficient.

Primary and secondary containment

When I'm asked for recommendations on primary and secondary fencing, it is truly a situational question. First, it all depends on what you are trying to hold and how much money you're willing to spend on your primary containment. The answer will also be dictated by whether or not you are designing an exhibit that is for holding purposes, a traditional zoo setting, sanctuary or refuge, private owner, or even a wildlife park, which will require extensive fencing for pasture control and animal management. The proviso is that whatever will be used must be adequate to contain the species in question without presenting a clear and present danger to the animal, other animals, or members of the public. Translation, the containment chosen must be of quality construction and of a sufficient gauge or strength to hold the animal under all potential conditions.

The most common style of containment in use today is some form of mesh. It's nor-

mally a specific style and often galvanized. I should mention that there are numerous facilities that have successfully used chain link style galvanized fencing for many years with no problems. However, I do not recommend chain link fencing as a general rule. The reason is that once it is breached it can begin to unravel. Speaking from personal experience, splicing chain link is not something I enjoy doing. What I normally try to do instead is to utilize a ranch or zoological supplier for mesh. The best resource in my experience for this is in the Commercial Members section in the AZA Directory (Association of Zoos & Aquariums) or from the AZA website, <http://www.aza.org/FindCommercialMember/>). Mesh is available in a wide variety of fabrications, and can be had in draped form, rolled form, and welded panel form.

The draping form style is usually identified as a woven mesh. Good examples of this are Carlos® and Phantom® style meshes. They are of an extremely high quality and can really expedite construction timetables once your support poles are up and rigged for mounting. Personally, I prefer using galvanized welded wire mesh that has been either powder coated or vinyl coated. I have found these to have really good properties such as rigidity coupled with a certain degree of flex in the event of animal impact. One of the best examples of this is Shepherd Mesh®, although there are numerous companies that produce quality materials in this style. Priefert® also manufactures this style of welded mesh in a framed powder coated panel configuration that provides good service as well.

One important point, the mesh opening and gauge is usually species-specific. For example, certain smaller felids may require a 1" x 1" mesh configuration and roofing as well for species prone to climbing and leaping. One of the other styles that I have seen used for primary containment would be industrial piano wire. It's a really neat concept and when properly installed and maintained it fades out of the visual spectrum. The downside is that your animal care staff will probably have to walk it every day and



William Baker and Phoenix

physically check each individual wire for weakness. Of course, gunite moats and physical barriers are always a possibility as well for containing larger felids, it just depends on what your budget can support.

As far as fence material gauge it really depends on what you are planning to hold. Typically, I prefer using coated 2" x 4" mesh in a 10 gauge or stronger material in a vertical configuration with a supported roof. If I am using a framed panel then the supports are every ten feet and secured with turnbuckles to a 12" x 12" concrete footer. This caging style also allows me to manage a wide variety of small and medium sized carnivores with little if any modification. However, this construction style requires a level site to execute this. For attached mesh applications I drop a heavy metal support post every five feet in a concrete encasement three feet into the ground. This style can follow land contours, but works best when concrete footers are incorporated into the design. Cantilevered supports and hot-wires are a must for open-topped exhibits to prevent climbing and jump-outs. The single best resource for determining your species-specific needs would be the AZA Husbandry Guidelines for Mammals, as it encompasses the combined knowledge of the zoological and wildlife profession. Another great resource would be to check the Felid TAG website for specific recommendations and

current developments. <http://www.felid-tag.org>

Perimeter fencing is a much easier proposition to discuss. Ideally you want to keep intruders out and have a last line of defense to hold animals in the event of an escape. I prefer using fences that are 12 feet in height and 14 gauge or heavier. This way I stay ahead of any proposed changes in federal and state regulations. Posts should be set in the ground with concrete to a depth of at least two feet, kept to ten foot spans, and capable of handling the torque when the fence is stretched or put under tension. Chain link fences are ideal for this type of situation, but I really like using something with a 1" x 2" or 2" x 4" inch opening that tends to prevent intruder entry. There's nothing worse than installing a fence and having someone demonstrate its flaws.

I was visiting a facility many years ago and they had installed a brand new 4" x 4" mesh fence for secondary perimeter containment. After we had walked the fence line, we needed to return to grounds because of a radio call from the staff. Imagine their surprise when I just went over the fence and took the short cut to our destination. In going with a large mesh opening as a cost saving measure, they had built a really nice ladder into the design. Best advice, plan and then look for the flaws, it's always easier to fix it on paper than after the fact.

Exhibit and nighthouse design

There is a high degree of variability when it comes to designing an animal holding area, especially when considering the variety of potential applications. However, in the most basic sense there are two key components: exhibit and nighthouse. Exhibits provide an exercise, training, and display area, while the nighthouse provides a secure holding area for night security, weather, or exhibit repairs. Each has its own unique safety concerns.

Exhibit safety

- Is the exhibit developed for keeper, service vehicle, and heavy equipment access? In other words, has the designer provided for long-term access to the exhibit itself, otherwise the staff will have serious problems getting into the exhibit area for repairs, renovation, and landscaping. The

installation of a service gate system can provide easy access for the animal staff, especially in the event of a natural disaster.

- Remember to install double gates for foot traffic whenever possible that lead into the exhibit area. This allows safe "airlock" access into the exhibit and dramatically reduces the potential of an animal escape should a problem or missed step occur with an animal shift into the night house.

- Is the landscaping just an accent or has it taken over the perimeter of the area to the point of no return? Sure, you want the "regional look," but can you observe the cats on exhibit without reaching for your machete to hack a path to the New World? It's important to have the capability to observe your cats for location and to inspect the primary containment at a glance for security. If you can't see your cage material, it isn't inspection friendly.

- Does the exhibit area have adequate security to prevent public interaction with the cats? Secondary guardrails should be strong enough to prevent trespass and distant from primary containment caging. Holly bushes, palmettos, and cactus do a great job of keeping visitors on their side of the secondary guardrail.

- Has any thought been given to night security? Night lighting should provide adequate illumination should the need arise. If the exhibit is expansive there should be enough security lights oriented along the exhibit perimeter to enable the staff to see the entire yard at a glance, especially in the event of a nighttime emergency.

- Exhibit designers seem to have real problems understanding drainage surrounding an exhibit. All too often the exhibit is flooded from the public areas during heavy rains. Always direct water flow away from the exhibit with a drain system and if at all possible, put the exhibit on slightly higher ground to prevent pooling.

Night house safety

- The first item that should be noted is whether or not the entry has double containment. This "airlock system" is often times the only thing between the cat and freedom. Also, does both of the entry doors swing inward and close backwards? There is nothing more embarrassing than having the animal out of primary containment, pushing the outer doors open, and then



PVC 1" x 3" x 10.5 gauge welded wire



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going for a walk.

- Whenever possible I recommend that the nighthouse be constructed of either reinforced concrete or masonry block. This will provide a "safe zone" for your animals in the event of a disaster and guarantee that when the exhibit is damaged, you will have a safe place to hold them until repairs are completed.

- Are the internal corridors laid out so that you can effectively see end to end? Designers love putting in corridors at right angles. A good night house doesn't have blind spots. If there are blind spots leading to holding areas in the building, retrofit the hallways with security mirrors so you can see the cat before he can see you.

- Do the floor, corridor, and exhibit drains really work? Masonry contractors are notorious for deciding on their own what type of slope and brush finish your floors get. Don't forget drain size. I can't count how many night houses I have seen that have 1" lines instead of 3" drain lines to handle water volume.

- Is the guillotine door system an afterthought? Does it stick if you look at it wrong? The coolest design I have seen to date is produced by Corners Limited®. They utilize stainless steel doors in a corrosion free frame. The door actually rides on two coated rails that keep the fall and lift even. The cable rides inside a conduit system that is connected by internal pulleys that prevent the cable from binding or jumping.

- Ventilation. Is your night house a



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sauna? Ventilator fans can reduce ambient heat. Don't forget air conditioning, heat, and circulating fans depending on your climate. In high humidity areas think about adding a dehumidifier to your air conditioner or utilize flow-through fans. If you are uncomfortable, chances are the cats are too.

- With many of the current developments in operant conditioning and desensitization work, there are a few items you may want to include in the development process. Restraint chutes that are in-line with shift corridors leading out onto exhibit are helpful for veterinary procedures. Also, consider the possibility of including training areas adjacent to night holding to facilitate your training sessions. I find it helpful when training to have a quiet area to introduce new behaviors or refine existing ones without distractions.

- Finally, has thought been giving to crisis management? The following equipment should be handy if needed: Fire extinguishers (CO₂ and ABC), smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, first aid kit, pepper spray canisters, back-up emergency lighting, back-up power for hot wires (battery or generator), shields, and dart rifles. Also, is the keeper work area, kitchen, or bathroom centralized? This way if something does go wrong, there is a safe, secure, integrated area. Ideally, this area should be equipped with a telephone, back-up radio, and serious containment such as reinforced

mesh doors or a viewing window of reinforced tempered glass or heavy Lexan® construction. This way the cat can be kept under constant observation until the problem is resolved.

Locks

Personally, I think padlocks are the most underrated form of security at a zoological facility. All too often I see facilities build great exhibits and holding areas, then turn around and secure them with the cheapest lock that they can find in the name of maintaining control of their annual budget. What type of lock you use can make all of the difference in the world. I can't begin to count over the years how many locks I have seen fail on the third pull while trying to confirm that the lock actually caught and held. There are few things worse than having a lock fall apart in your hands and then putting on a new lock from the same type and series. It just doesn't make sense. There are two brands of locks that I exclusively use and recommend, Master Lock® and LSDA®. Both are comparable in quality. In my experience, they offer the best weather and strike resistant locks on the market.

Master Pro Series™ padlock – 6850 products

2" (51 mm) wide body, hardened boron steel alloy shackle for cut resistance, removable cylinder can be replaced or repinned, 5-spool pin tumbler for added pick resistance, solid brass bodies and cylinders, and stainless dual ball bearing locking mechanism for protection against prying and hammering.

Master Home and Yard padlock – 150 KAD product

2" (50 mm) wide body, 5-pin tumbler security, hardened steel shackle, solid brass lock body. While not as nice as the 6850 products, these locks can provide good reliable service when maintained properly.

LSDA Pin Tumbler padlocks – BP 500 products

2" (50 mm) wide body, solid brass corrosion resistant body, pin tumbler cylinder with solid brass keyway, chrome plated hardened steel shackle, double locking shackle mechanism, and a choice of differ-

ent keying options. Supplied with two nickel-plated brass keys for smooth operation.

Emergency supplies

Natural disasters have the potential to be the most devastating of all potential hardships to strike an animal facility. The catastrophic damage from Hurricanes Andrew and Katrina are classic examples. Essentially, if you are in an area that is prone to blizzards, earthquakes, flooding, hurricanes, or tornados, you unfortunately have to plan for the worst including a complete evacuation. However, the staff at a facility should weigh a potential evacuation very carefully, as it may be unnecessary. Several facilities have successfully weathered hurricanes with limited loss of life. Thankfully most exhibits and night houses that hold dangerous animals are heavily reinforced and tend to do well in severe weather circumstances. Historically, the approach that I have worked from is that crisis equipment can be broken down into two classes, Dedicated Crisis Equipment, (DCE) that is utilized in the event of an actual crisis and Emergency Support Equipment, (ESE) which is utilized after the fact.

I. Crisis Management Equipment

1. Dedicated Crisis Equipment (DCE)

- A. crisis response equipment
 - a. firearms and dart rifle
 - b. flashlights and binoculars
 - c. first aid and trauma kits
 - d. animal capture and restraint
- B. rescue equipment
 - a. ladders
 - b. tool kit
 - c. entry tools
 - d. cutting torch

2. Emergency Support Equipment (ESE)

- A. vital services equipment
 - a. generators and pumps
 - b. lights, heaters, and fans
 - c. animal transport crates
 - d. propane heat units and tanks
- B. fabrication equipment
 - a. tool kits
 - b. netting and shade cloth
 - c. containment material
 - d. construction material

For the purposes of this discussion, I'll focus on emergency support equipment. Effectively, this is the equipment that will allow a facility to resume operations or pro-

vide some sense of normalcy after the crisis has occurred. Vital services equipment is the equipment that will actually restore or maintain the utilities, which most facilities rely upon for water, electrical, and gas. Water storage tanks or towers can replace broken water lines. Back-up or stand-by generators can replace disrupted electrical grids, which in turn provides lighting, heaters, fans, hot-wires, and pump units. Propane can effectively replace broken gas lines which provides heat, hot water, and in some cases power for generators. Solar power and well water can also provide supplemental service in certain situations.

Fabrication equipment is best described as building materials specific to providing temporary shelter, temporary containment, or utilized to repair existing structures. This can literally run the gamut from tools to actually perform the repairs all the way up to and including building materials. Examples would include plywood (multiple thickness), screws, nails, staples, tar paper, roofing materials, treated posts, 1" x 1" mesh, 2" x 4" mesh (8 gauge), solar powered hot-wire systems, 1" x 1" netting (rolled), steel cable and tension bars, eye hooks, bagged concrete, shade cloth, plastic zip ties, portable cattle panels and caging units, water and feed buckets, sheet metal, angle iron, welding rods, and a portable welder. Actually, this list could go on forever as every facility is a little different from the next and the needs will shift based on exhibit design and the diversity of the animal collection.

I also try to place with this material one completely stocked fabrication tool kit, one portable generator, one portable pump, and one cutting torch unit with full bottles on a dolly, plus a grinder and a chainsaw. The associated safety equipment such as gloves, glasses, and hearing protection are usually factored in as well. The fabrication type of tool kit usually could best be identified as a master set in a large rolling cabinet or job-site style toolbox. Either way, the only limiter is how much money that you want to spend. Ideally, the more you can spend, the better off you and the facility will be when the need arises. I recommend a lifetime guarantee brand such as Craftsman®, Kobalt®, Snap-On®, or any of the other brands that are popular with mechanics. Each set should have the full range of tools

including wrenches, ratchets, screwdrivers, nut drivers, pliers, hammers, hex and Allen wrenches, and saws. Something else to consider is purchasing a set of rechargeable power tools. These are absolutely invaluable with the fabrication equipment style tool kits and can easily be recharged from a portable generator for continued usage.

Storage of all of this equipment presents a challenge. My answer to this problem is to purchase a "Conex-style" storage container, such as those used by air and sea freight companies, steel in nature, and equipped with lockable hardware they provide a secure and dry place to store virtually anything. I recommend using a high quality lock with extremely limited key access and partially burying the unit in the ground with concrete retaining walls to prevent potential damage in severe weather, (tornado or hurricane). Once complete this storage unit can supply a small repair crew with anything they could need. Final point, I do recommend installing battery-powered lights inside the storage unit, as they can get quite dark. Another point to remember are personal supplies for you and your animals:

Personal Emergency Items

- Water—Expect to use two liters of water per person per day. Plan on a 7-day supply.
- Food—Ready to eat foods that require no refrigeration. Examples include canned and dry goods, dehydrated foods, and high-energy foods. Plan on a 7-day supply.
- Shelter—Tents, plastic or canvas tarps are all good choices along with a synthetic sleeping bag.
- A multi-person first aid kit with minor trauma capabilities.
- A non-electric can opener.
- Sun block and pest repellent.
- Waterproof flashlight and extra batteries.
- Waterproof matches.
- A compass and detailed map of your local area, (store in a plastic zip bag).
- World band radio and extra batteries.
- Cash, traveler's checks, and a credit card.
- Shut-off wrench to turn gas and or water service off.
- Personal hygiene and sanitation supplies.
- Personal medical or prescription based drugs. (insulin etc.)
- Important family documents and records, (especially insurance policies, birth

records, passports, a household inventory, and any applicable animal or veterinary records.)

- Always factor in food, water, and veterinary supplies for each animal. You may have to forgo using a portable generator for other things to keep your meat freezer running. Ice chests are a must-have item.

Final comments

It truly is impossible to prepare for every crisis. The key is to base your approach on addressing safety issues in advance and developing a broad based approach to crisis management. Conversely, any of the aforementioned recommendations can be integrated into your approach in varying degrees. For instance, night houses come in all shapes and sizes to fit virtually any budgetary situation. Safety and integrity can be maintained by sacrificing interior square footage, as you ideally want to choose basic features over space when faced with financial constraints. Another approach is to gradually budget towards development over time and not attempt to take all of this on in the same fiscal year. Any progress made is still progress and your animals, peers, and regulatory agencies will note it. Always remember, the single best crisis resource is your ability to calmly manage a situation and resolve it in a timely manner. If you can do that, then you already have the single best tool that you could ever want. •

About the author: Since 1985 Bill Baker has been active in the fields of science, zoology, and wildlife management. His education and experience include a B.S. in wildlife management and post-graduate studies in zoology, lab and museum assistant, shoot team leader, ERT member, large mammal keeper, senior keeper, and zoo curator at various zoological facilities. His area of research is crisis management in zoological institutions, which draws upon practical experience and training as a rescue diver, hunter safety instructor, NRA firearms instructor, and Red Cross CPR/first aid instructor. Away from work he operates Panthera Research, a research and consulting firm, and may be contacted at puma_cat@hotmail.com

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AMERICAN ZOO AND AQUARIUM ASSOCIATION

The LIOC/FCF Journal Searchable Archive

In December 1956, Catherine Cisin rolled a sheet of paper into her typewriter and started pounding out Volume 1, Issue 1 of the Long Island Ocelot Club Newsletter. Not even two years prior, the club was founded with just three members. Now the club had grown so quickly—and so many lessons were learned—that Catherine saw the wisdom of publishing a bimonthly newsletter.

50 years and 300 issues later, Catherine's newsletter is still being published.

As of 2006, it was believed there were only two complete sets of back issues remaining. Or maybe there was only one. All it would take is a small natural disaster or fire and 50 years of lessons and history could be forgotten.

Even in 1997 there was some concern that the club was on the verge of losing its legacy. To insure the newsletter was not lost, Sharon Roe found, borrowed, and copied a complete set of newsletters from Carin (Carmichael) Sousa and donated them to the club. It is upon this set of complete newsletters plus those of Lynn Culver's private collection that this DVD is based.

Lynn Culver has possession of FCF's one full copy of the newsletter. Since we did not want to risk getting these irreplaceable issues lost in the mail, it was decided that they would be scanned in Arkansas and digital files be sent to California for assembly.

The concept of the back issue DVD was first presented to the FCF board in April 2006. The board immediately approved it and provided some funds. Work began in earnest in May of 2006 and continued for seven months.

Each page was scanned as a 6 megabyte grayscale TIFF and then they were uploaded to Mike Friese's FTP server. Mike de-screened, contrast-enhanced, and re-margined all those TIFFs using Adobe Photoshop and Lemke GraphicConverter. Each issue was then converted to PDF using Adobe Acrobat and the underlying text was captured with OCR. The resulting 300 PDF files were then indexed by content for fast searches and replicated onto a DVD.

With the distribution of this DVD, the

quantity of full sets of the newsletter jumps from one (or two) to 1000!

We hope that this DVD is new insurance that FCF's written legacy of hands-on feline husbandry is never lost or forgotten. We also hope it also provides a tool for newer members to learn via 50 years of groundbreaking research, pain, luck, and love. Plus, everybody will find these old issues fun to read.

How to use the DVD:

You must have at least version 4 of Adobe Acrobat installed on your Windows, Macintosh, or Linux computer to view the files. If you wish to perform rapid (indexed by content) text searches, you may need a newer version of Adobe Acrobat. Installers for many popular computers can be found on the DVD.

The copyright license on the DVD also allows you to make a copy of the DVD on your hard drive. Copy everything except "Acrobat Installers" and "pbonus." This

will reduce the search time to as low as one second. You are not permitted to network or publish the content on this DVD in any other way. (Note that the readme on the DVD has incorrect instructions on what to copy.)

You can either browse individual issues or you can perform a rapid text search of all the issues.

To browse the issues, open the "tableof-contents.html" file and click on the issue of interest. Or you may open folder containing the year of interest and double click on the issue.

To search all the issues, double click on the 0SEARCH.pdf file. Acrobat will open to a search window with the index-searching mode selected. Type some text in the search box. An outline list of matching documents will appear beneath the text box. Just click on the match of interest.

We hope you enjoy exploring this vast resource. •



Mace Loftus

The November/December 2006 issue was printed on polycarbonate instead of paper. Now every FCF member has a complete set of the Journal.

Blast from the Past. . . . **Trials of a New Exotic Owner**

Long Island Ocelot Club
November/December 1971—Volume 15, Issue 6

By Donald L. Chesnut Streator, Illinois
Three years BC—Before Cat

If you don't count Frank Buck style, Walter Mitty day dreaming of a young boy, I guess the real beginning was when I saw a newsreel of an exotic cat meeting years ago. From that point on I knew I would have an exotic someday.

This schoolboy desire had a rebirth about three years ago and I seriously started to search for information. In a town of 20,000, the library just doesn't offer much help, let alone answer questions such as: Where could I get one? What do you feed it, besides nosy neighbors, that is? What restrictions are there?

I Become a Trainee

I'm a YMCA director and am probably

involved in more groups and clubs than the average person could think even existed, and as a bachelor with no family commitments, I'm probably more active in them. But I've never met a group like this LIOC. Catherine Cisin not only answered my letter immediately but also enclosed additional information. I learned more from her answers to my questions than I had learned from all my research up to that date. I took membership in the LIOC, bought a copy of *Especially Ocelots* for myself and a second copy for my vet, and received the LIOC newsletter. We're off again!

The clincher was really the letter from the Mid-western Branch. The branch was good enough to keep me informed and the day finally came when Bob Little hosted a

meeting in Crawfordsville, Indiana. Bob met me at the front door and escorted me around to the back. As I entered the kitchen the first thing I saw was a pair of margays on the cupboards over the sink. After introductions I found a chair in front of the TV. Feasting my eyes on some of the cats, I failed to notice an ocelot on the TV set until he started to growl behind my ear. Now, I'm an old football player and I'll be darned if I'm going to act scared in front of the club members because some 20-30 lb cat gurgles behind my ear. Then came lesson number one. I was told I could pet the ocelot with instructions that once I started I had to continue regardless of what the cat did. If he succeeded in bluffing me I'd never be able to touch him again. That reg-



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istered in the back of my mind and I have used it since.

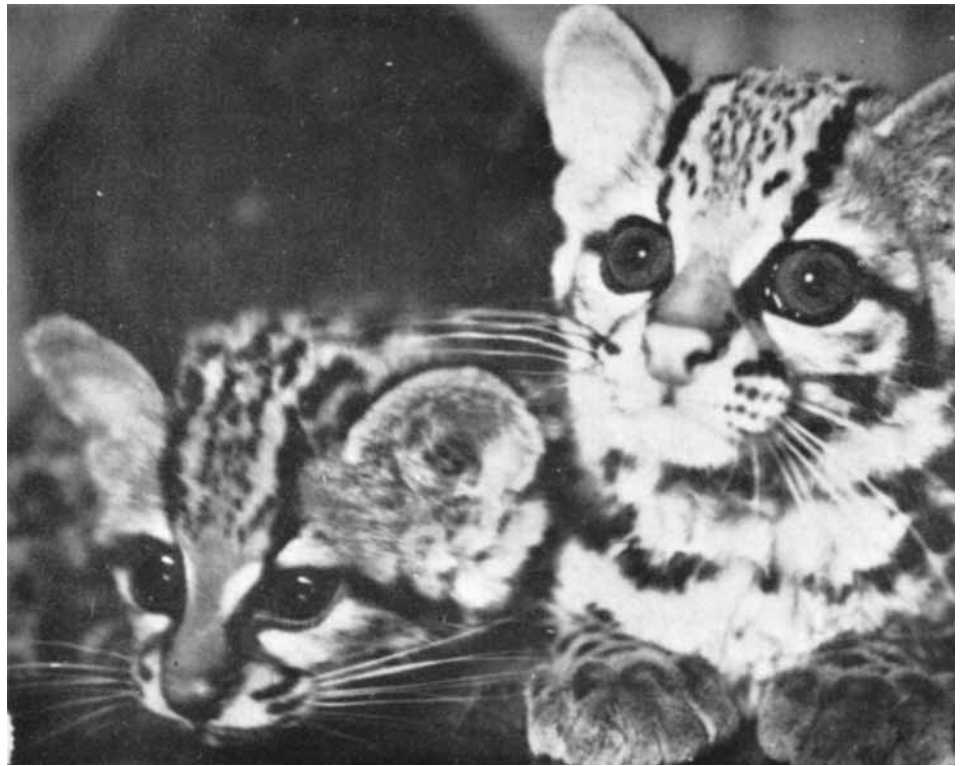
Almost as much fun as the cats were the people and their willingness to help. A fascinating discussion, question and answer, and general exchange of information followed. Here was a group willing to move to help their cat, change insurance because of their cat, sacrifice furniture to their cats, and yet not one person flatly recommended anyone else obtain a cat. They do not take their pets lightly. Their collective impression on me was that the rewards of a tractable exotic were the result of a great many sacrifices.

My second real thrill of the day came shortly after. I had heard some talk of the “big cat” being upstairs. Naturally I assumed that this guy was a large ocelot. Boy, was I ever wrong! While leaning on the stairway railing—we were watching two ocelots get introduced—I felt a sniffing at my elbow. I turned around to see what was there and—gulp—there it was. My movement startled the cat and I heard my first cougar hiss. Now my heart was going PITY-PAT in capital letters. Again I kept my composure and played the part of Joe Cool, but while I’m patting myself on the back for not having to change my Pampers, Dave Shifley, who was standing beside me and was also new to the cat, started advancing to the puma and petted it. This guy is dumber than I am. (I later learned that Dave has had a great deal of experience with animals.) It was quite a sight to see this large cat rubbing up against Bob Little like a well-trained dog. And that bird-like chirp the cougar makes you just can’t believe until you hear it. I still think he swallowed a canary. And to complete the day Mike Biggs showed up with Leo, a three-month-old lion. What a playful and trusting guy he turned out to be.

That night I returned home with a decision remade. As always I wanted a puma but ruled that out because of size. The margay didn’t have that large cat appeal so the ocelot seemed to fit the bill best.

I buy a cat

Although disappointed in not returning home with a cat, my pet shop owner came to the rescue. She called to tell me that she had just hired a new manager who owned an ocelot and a margay and wanted to sell the margay. I jumped in my car and drove the 20 miles to meet Marty Hamilton and



Angel and Satan, two margays belonging to Donald L. Chestnut of Streator, Illinois, do their best to harass him with their all-too-successful raids on his towels. Actually, the margay on the right is properly called “Little Angel” after Don’s first margay.

his 1½ year-old male ocelot. This combination was just unbelievable. The affection this cat shows and the control Marty has over him is something to watch. Marty explained the margay was female, 8 months old and in good health but he felt that in fairness to the cat he had to sell her. With the change of job, home, and a new baby, he couldn’t give her the time needed.

Marty brought the cat the next day and after one look at him handling her we closed the deal. Angel had an exceptionally pretty coat and showed affection to Marty but was more reserved than the ocelot.

So off we went to Angel’s new home. Angel hadn’t had a meal because of traveling so I fed her as soon as we got home. What an appetite. She eats two to three times as much as my two domestics put together. After giving Angel a couple of hours to explore and put herself at ease I went over to pet her and had to resort to Lesson #1. Even though she snarled and hissed I petted anyway. She slept that night on top of the salt-water aquarium.

The following day I got the “I don’t trust you” treatment. Sometimes there was little reaction when I touched her and at other

times she put up a real show. I heard a faint sound while I petted her that night and couldn’t tell if it was a purr or a growl. When I moved my head I found out. Before I could blink Angel had claws on either side of my head and bared teeth just off the end of my nose. She did no damage but was ready to lie in. I now know that when the tip of her tongue sticks out she is definitely not purring. I gave no reaction or punishment and that night Angel walked across the bed a few times in her early morning stroll.

The next morning being Sunday I woke to a ringing telephone. I still don’t know who called because when I lifted the receiver I found it was no longer connected to the phone base. My “cat proof” apartment had a flaw. That twisted cord was a real cat attraction. Angel also demonstrated that exotics demand constant attention in the litter box department. She refused to use it more than once. Fortunately three litter boxes helped a little. I also found that the exotics have a stronger urine and stool odor than domestics. My Siamese apparently agreed for she wouldn’t allow that stuff in her litter box and threw it out.

On our third night together, acceptance was finally earned and Angel and I had a play period together. One at 1:30 a.m., a second at 3:00 and again at 6:00 a.m. This was to become a ritual we continued every night. After such a successful night, how could I resist petting Angel at 9:00 a.m.? That was my first real bite. I guess I looked a little dumbfounded as I stood watching the blood drip out of my thumb. What had happened to that loving cat of last night?

This routine continued for several days and after consulting Marty I was told not to let her get away with it. Then came the decision, do you hit the cat or not? Well, we went through a period where I hit her and said "NO" each time I got bit. Result: a

cat ready to do battle. She had no fear of my size at all and had a habit of getting even each time she was punished for something. She knew what she was being punished for and would repeat the action once more immediately after punishment or change her toilet habit to punish me.

After a few weeks Angel and I reached a mutual agreement. I wouldn't bother her in the daytime and at 9:45 p.m. she walked into the bedroom for supper and became Miss Friendly Plus. Until after breakfast I could expect to get my face washed and my nose nibbled on continuously. When Angel accidentally bit me instead of the toy we played with, she would run away a few feet and then apologize her way back into favor. From this point on there was never any punishment. A good "no" worked wonders while a physical punishment worked up World War III. If she played too rough, I stopped the game and would start to read a book.

For five months this routine continued, developing a love that I never thought possible with a pet. Now I know what LIOC really means when they say "the cat owns you." A partnership evolved with another interesting observation. At home Angel would allow no one near except me (so friends weren't allowed to visit as often) but when put in her traveling cage for our trips together, anyone could handle her as far as

petting. A complete change of personality occurred. I'm not sure how to interpret this but I'm keeping it in mind for future consideration. Angel was never caged except for travel.

It was about this time I made my first in a series of big mistakes. I was to lead a group from the YMCA on a weekend camp-out to the Wisconsin Dells. This was to be the first time I left Angel for any

After a few weeks Angel and I reached a mutual agreement. I wouldn't bother her in the daytime and at 9:45 p.m. she walked into the bedroom for supper and became Miss Friendly Plus.

length of time. For three days Angel lived at the pet shop with her former owners and seemed to get along fine. Marty's wife Janice spent a great deal of time with Angel and got so she could handle her again out of the cage. The following weekend was the start of my vacation. Two

weeks of scuba diving and camping in Florida would mean Angel would either have to spend two weeks in a cage or stay at home. I couldn't stand to think of her in a cage that long so I got a reliable girl to

take care of Angel while I was gone.

During this time Angel went off her feed and started acting strange. The "cat-sitter" called Marty according to my instructions. After looking at Angel from the business end Marty talked to the vet who agreed to drive 20 miles to examine the cat at home. The doc was unable to examine her close but observed her as close as possible from her position on top of the cupboards. His diagnosis was that Angel was in great physical shape and her only problem was that she missed me. This proved to be the case and my return also returned the appetite.

The final blow to Angel came two weeks later when the relatives were to meet at the Minnesota State Fair over the Labor Day weekend. As we were camping I again rejected the cage idea and brought in the cat sitter. Someone had to come to feed my saltwater fish anyway.

I fed Angel Saturday morning before I left and when I didn't return that night she refused all food. When I returned this time Angel still refused to eat. Two days in a row she chewed through the phone cord until I got a box to put it in. For the next

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three weeks we made several trips to the vet who could not see anything wrong. In the cage she always seemed alert and in the best of condition. She would not let others know she was ill. I was in the frustrating position of trying to convince the vet and Marty that Angel was in fact sick. The vet, of course, was under the handicap of not being able to examine Angel as completely as he would have liked because of my failure to train her to accept other people. Her temperature and symptoms just didn't add up to anything.

On Sunday, September 20, I was laying on the floor reading a book when Angel walked in ahead of her usual time. She rubbed up against my face and walked down the whole length of my body. This was repeated several times, as she would walk through the house between trips. Each time past I petted her. She seemed strange when she walked over the couch. Here was a cat the vet said was the most coordinated and fastest animal he ever saw walking off the edge of the couch like she didn't know she came to the step off. All the time she watched me. She made one last trip through the kitchen and when she didn't come out in a few minutes I went to check on her. I found her trapped in the V-shaped leg of the kitchen table. She had been through there hundreds of times before but did not look as though she had the strength to get out this time. When I untangled her I got a real heartbreak watching her legs buckle on her and spread out at 180 degrees. I immediately picked up my LIOC vet list, which is always nearby and placed a midnight call to the vet. While I talked to him on the phone Angel responded to my voice, mustered up her strength and stumbled into the living room. She walked over and wrapped her legs around one of mine, rested her head on my leg and just held on. That was hard to take.

The vet couldn't believe the cat could drop that much from his last look at her. He said he would be willing to look at her but didn't honestly know what he could do for her. At this point I was convinced she wouldn't live long enough to get to the vet. I held and petted her all night. At 8:00 a.m. Angel still wouldn't give up and I met the vet as he opened up. He was immediately impressed with the seriousness of her condition and we went to work on her. Marty

and Janice Hamilton were good enough to offer me their home, which is near the vet hospital and I took the day off. We were all surprised when Angel was still alive that night in spite of the fact the vet almost gave up his practice to treat the margay every hour or two. Even as weak as she was, I still had to hold her so she could see me. Even then, the good doctor got clawed and bit.

For the second night in a row I stayed up all night and with the help of Marty, we fed Angel with a stomach tube and helped her drink. The vet made several late night house calls and we injected Ringers solution under the skin.

Angel was never a vocal cat and perhaps that made it all the worse for us when she cried for help. The next day and night were much the same with Angel looking stronger at times and then weaker. That night Marty again proved his friendship and love of the exotics by staying up his second night with me, while Janice checked several times to see if there was any change. We got a two-hour nap and a one-hour nap during the night and Wednesday morning the margay was still alive but noticeably weaker.

We were down to one last chance. A transfusion. Finally a friend was willing to chance their house cat to help Angel by the transfusion, no other cats being available. I went to pick-up the cat with Marty at the wheel of his Camaro more than a little over the speed limit, but when we returned, Angel had finally let go of life.

Marty and I put the donor cat in a cage and walked out of the vet's office. When the reception girl asked about Angel and I actually spoke the words "It's all over," the bottom fell out. I started to follow Marty and then stopped. I think we were both afraid to let the other see tears. Emotional and physical fatigue was catching up with both of us. That night I called Marty who had assisted with the necropsy. Marty said the vet had made the statement that he didn't think they would find anything. On examination, she was as perfect inside as she had been beautiful on the outside. His official opinion was that Angel died of emotional collapse, or simply heartbreak. She could not cope with my recent trips without her.

Angel died Wednesday, September 23

and I spent Thursday with the understanding Hamiltons who shared their ocelot Toby with me. I couldn't stand to think of going through that experience again but at the same time a part of me was missing. I made the decision to get another exotic, preferably an ocelot, but rather than repeat the same mistakes, I wanted a pair to keep each other company.

The following day we called some compounds over our lunch hour and found two margay kittens. We placed an order and picked them up at O'Hare airport in Chicago that night. Just like three little kids under the Christmas tree, we couldn't wait to open the crates. Out of the first came the smallest, ugliest cat I've ever seen. That face was so ugly it was cute. Janice lifted the little male out and he calmed right down. The second crate showed us a beautiful bundle of hisses and spits. This gal proved to be a real terror. After some petting and working with, we found the female would not bite but kept up her bluff for quite a while.

The male appeared quite tame and the female quite wild. However, over the weekend, I found the female would eat off my finger and almost got to the point I had to hand feed her everything. On the other hand, the "tame" male would eat off my finger and then try for the finger as well. The following Monday, I shocked the vet with two more of "those things." The male weighed in at one pound, seven ounces with the vet was not too pleased about his condition in general. The female was two pounds, seven ounces and in basically fair condition. Both seem to be doing fine after one week. Neither cat seems to have the exceptional contrast Angel had but they are getting more beautiful each day. Because of the uncanny similarities in mannerisms, we called the female "Little Angel" and what could you call the male after that except "Satan?"

I am by no stretch of the imagination a writer, but I hoped others might learn something from my story. Sometimes love alone just isn't enough. Little Angel and Satan have a nice big traveling cage in addition to the smaller "go to the vet" cage. As soon as they get some strength and protection from shots, they are going to learn to travel and meet other people. Other than the Hamiltons and myself, they will learn to accept the vet. •

Private Ownership, Trust, and Responsibility

A guest editorial

By Rick Armstrong

I believe in private ownership but I also believe in responsibility. I still have my cats. I love them all very much. I have a beautiful tiger named Rawdy. His name fits him and he is about 9 years old. Do I love him? Yes. Do I trust him? No. He is still a tiger and he will always be. I still have a lock out for him so I can clean his pen.

We do not need any more problems, or injuries, or deaths. Some people won't agree with me on this but I feel very strongly about it. Some people won't think I love my cat, but I do and that is why I can write this, because I do love him. Most accidents are caused by people who go in the pen to clean or feed, or just play. People figure that they raised their cat from a cub, he's my pet, and he has never tried to hurt me. Well just wait, you're an accident waiting to happen. Be responsible not dumb. Anyone not having a lockout or perimeter fence, is asking for problems sooner or later. The animal

activists are just waiting for it to happen. We need to watch what we are doing so we don't give them more ammunition. I know of a girl who has two beautiful Bengal tigers. She goes in with them with no lockouts or outside fence. She sounds she loves her cats. I feel if she loves them, she would protect them, by just doing two things: a lockout and a perimeter fence. Lockout-outside fence so keep the cats safe from people and people from them. Oh this girl's cats are sweethearts, yes they are, but they are tigers big and strong and she is one of the people, just waiting for an accident. If you don't take these basic precautions you're not a responsible owner. And yes, if you love your animal, this should be on top of your list

before those cats hurt anyone or anything. If they do, they could pay the ultimate price. If you love them you don't want that to happen.

Let's educate cat owners and try to help them to understand the pitfalls of not having lockouts and perimeters. •



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Intern Experiences—Enrichment from a Frenchman's Perspective

Thierry Plaud

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am Thierry Plaud, a new FCF member, having joined a few short months ago. I am a native Frenchman, and I reside in Cely-en-Biere, France. I tend to get around more than the average feline fancier in that I am a pilot for Air France, flying in the right seat of Boeing 747-400. When not flying the heavy jets, my second passion is rock climbing. My best claim to fame would be that I am the only guy over 40 in the world to climb "V13" boulder grade. In rock climbing the difficulties of the boulder climbs are measured by grades from "V1" which the novice can climb after a few weeks of training to "V15", the most difficult. There are less than ten climbs in the

whole world of the "V-15" category. I made it up to "V13!" My first love is cats and I have several nice ones that live with me and my wife including Ella, my favorite Asian leopard cat.

I was prompted to write this article after my associate and dear friend Jim Broaddus hosted an internship for me at his facility near Panama City, Florida. I had the pleasure of working with six species at Bear Creek, including Jim's personal cougar pet, Dani, and numerous African servals, European wildcats, jaguarundis, Siberian lynx and three North American bobcats. Please keep in mind that the largest cat that I had experienced prior to this internship was my ALC. So, I didn't expect that only a few short hours after my arrival I would be sit-

ting with Dani the cougar. I quickly passed the Bear Creek litmus test and was given a key to enter each habitat with Jim hovering in the background doing his imitation of a mother hen.

Jim observed my approach to his animals and he told me that I had a special way with them like he had never seen before. He runs an intern program offering billets for those who seek to obtain the Florida Class II license with the "lesser cats." He convinced me that he was not patronizing me with his flattering comments and he encouraged me to reduce my experiences to writing for the benefit of others who are interested in learning enrichment techniques from across the pond.

Cats are predators. Their body and mind have been designed by nature to spot, catch and kill prey. Unfortunately, the prey that they depend upon for sustenance is not readily available to them in captivity. The act of killing is a small part of predation. A very small amount of time is actually spent killing and eating the prey and most of the hunting is done waiting, searching, and ambushing. Concern for fulfilling the captive cat's life does not end after building the enclosure, feeding quality meat and providing good veterinary care. These things are necessary but not enough. I have found that the two main things that will make the caged feline happy is bonding and proper enrichment. For a cat this means simulating predation.

So how does the keeper simulate predation? Remembering that the process of predation involves ambushing, jumping, catching, and biting unsuspecting prey, I use simple enrichment techniques to simulate the prey and its attempt to escape when captured.

I first set about the task of learning what each species prey on in the wild. The toys that I selected were species specific and were different for a serval that hunts small rodents, reptiles, small birds, and insects. The fishing cat would prefer frogs and fish. Canadian lynx would enjoy the snowshoe rabbit. Caracal would pounce small antelopes. You get the idea. So I have developed this technique. I try to copy both the appearance of the prey and its behavior. A small snake will creep continuously, a rodent will move quickly, stop and move quickly again while a bird will fly to perch and then return to flight. As I attempt to simulate this movement with a toy, I set my mind to mimic the actions of the prey. I am not just moving a toy, I project that the toy is the prey. I do not hesitate to make noises when playing, especially the sounds that the prey would make. I scratch like a rodent and I whistle like a bird. I never allow the cat to catch the prey too easily and once the subject cat captures the toy, I allow my cat to play with it for a few seconds and suddenly arrange for it to escape. This seems to make the hunt even more enjoyable. A good session will last between 20 minutes and an hour. After a stimulating session, I allow my subject to rest and appreciate the good time he just had. The following day I am always pleasantly surprised to see the

excitement of the cat when I approach the enclosure with the same toy.

I have found out that most of the toys offered at a pet shop do not interest wild felines, they are too easily destroyed by even the smallest cat. They are for the most part very expensive. After testing all types of enrichment tools, I recommend simple ropes and brushes. The rope diameter and length must be adapted to the size of the mouth of the cat. The animal should be able to bite it easily during play and the rope must be long enough to provide for running during play. It must be as flexible as possible. A good test is to fold it in half. If I cannot join the two halves without space between them, the rope is too stiff. Here's my secret. I tie a big knot at the end of the rope, grab the other end and begin to move the knots to simulate the movement of a rat, mouse, rodent, snake, or lizard.

Cats also enjoy brushes. Maybe it's because they see them as "symbolic" rodents. After all, when you think about it, a toothbrush to the small cat could be a short furry body with a very long tail. If I use the brush without the rope, I scrape the



ground in a non-regular pattern while I watch my fingers to avoid claws. I recommend attaching the brush to the rope and moving it quickly in front of the cat keeping the excitement high. As I notice that the cat begins to show signs that he is tired, I discontinue the session. I recommend that the minimum session last for at least 15-20 minutes which seems to provide for adequate bonding. This is followed by a rest period. One session a day seems to be adequate. All of this is keyed to hunting patterns most cats have in the wild.

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Since every cat is different, I pay close attention to applying my techniques during the right time of the day, using the right toy and the right duration. If I am patient and flexible, the reward will come and I have found that even the least sociable cat will eventually play if I am willing to invest enough time.

Here are a few personal experiences that should give you an idea as to how I applied my techniques to different species that I have dealt with recently. The smallest cats were Asian leopard cats; the largest were African lions.

Experience 1: My own Asian leopard cats.

Ella was the very first wildcat I bonded with. I learned that Asian leopard cats are an exceptionally shy breed. The first thing that amazed me was her total silence during the air transport from Prague (Czech Republic) to our home back in France. My fellow captain of the Air France flight from Prague to Paris allowed me to take her with me in the cabin. Hence, Ella was introduced to an Airbus 320's noisy cockpit. She was very wary but showed no panic signs. Most of my enrichment techniques were devel-

oped for Ella and then adapted to other species. Enrichment was discovered to be the best way I could bond with her because food did not provide enough incentive for this Asian leopard cat to overcome her natural fear for humans. In fact, I have found this to be true for most of the smaller cats that I have worked with including Geoffroy, rusty spotted, and black footed cats. The smaller the cat, the greater the fear factor. Ella is the only small exotic that I have seen that vocalizes when she does not like something. Each time I present her with a toy that she did not like, she protests loudly. With this ALC, I discovered that with patience and kindness, I gradually overcame her natural fear.

Experience 2: Bear Creek Feline Center

Bear Creek Feline Center is a sanctuary located near Panama City, Florida. I worked with a variety of lesser cats including a cougar, servals, bobcats, Siberian lynx, jaguarundi and Gordon's cats. I was welcomed there by Jim Broaddus and his wife Bertie with their famous southern hospitality extended the point that I was given their

own son's room. (Thank you very much James.) Just after my arriving, Jim gave me a tour of their well-maintained facility and introduced me to every resident cat including Aza, a female serval who showed signs of depression after a lost litter. Intending to breed servals once I return to France, I decided to spend quite a bit of time with this lady who, I must say, responded very well to my French accent (much more than the French ladies I might add.) The rope trick went so well that I was given a head butt each time I entered Aza's enclosure. My enrichment techniques worked with every cat at Bear Creek with the exception of the jaguarundi who would have needed much more time than the week I spent there. A little adapting was needed with Natasha the Siberian lynx. She seemed to enjoy a "flying toy" more than a classic rope. (They do prey on snow partridges, don't they?) Dani, the cougar, was found to be strong as hell, so it was difficult to retrieve the rope once she latched on to it. I also have to mention Chakka, a male serval, who exhibited his tendency to be hissy. He was possessive once he got the toy, which seems to be typi-

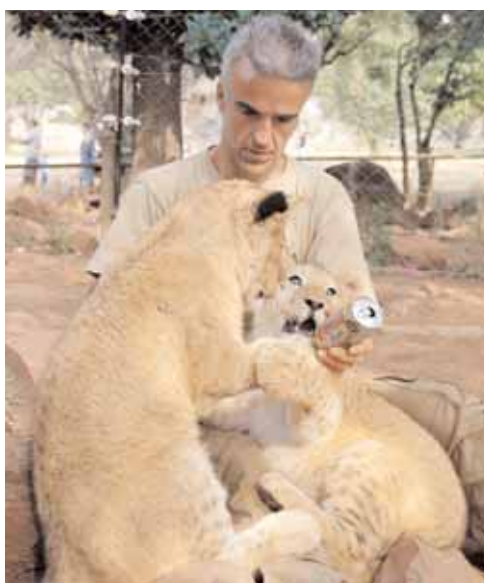


cal of this species. I found the serval to be a little bit shy before getting into the play and a bit aggressive once they really got into it. So to sum it up, with the lesser cats, I found it necessary to overcome their natural fear. I noticed signs of aggression once they possessed the toy and became accustomed to me. Jim taught me to watch out for little catch word expressions including as he calls it, the “smell, lick, bite” behavior pattern. This behavior is controlled by “Stop it before it starts.” He said that he attended an FCF husbandry course hosted by Lynn and Bart Culver in Mena, Arkansas years ago and “Keep your eye on the cat” was hammered into his head to the point of ad nauseum! I must have heard him say that to me dozens of times.

Experience 3: Lion Park of Johannesburg

The Lion Park of Johannesburg is a large facility similar to a zoo combined with a reserve. It is composed of a game reserve separated in several parts containing wild herbivores, prides of lions, cheetahs, and spotted hyenas. All of these animals roam freely. There are observation points where the public can view various carnivores including white lions, cheetahs, brown and spotted hyenas, leopards, and jaguars. I was admitted here by a special favor of Ian Melass, manager of the park. I participated in the park general duties with special emphasis on socializing and enrichment of lion cubs aged from 6 weeks to 6 months under the supervision of Helene Duerden, Nursery Manager, who showed much patience answering my endless questions.

The most surprising thing that I observed while working with the lions—apart from their size—is their total absence of any fear of human beings. This is true from the youngest age. The first time I sat among the seven 6-week-old cubs, they immediately responded to me and each one tried to grab and bite a different part of my body. The general idea here seemed to be to tear me apart. At 6 months I was told that they had enough strength to rip a human apart and from 18 months they can dismantle a human without any problem. The general rule of thumb is that they cannot discover how weak the human is so caution is the rule and no rough playing is recommended. No strength contests are allowed. Always “keep your eye on the cat,” but this



is true with any wild cat. No crouching in front of an adult and never, ever allow them to scratch or bite. The general idea with big cat is stop the game when the cat gets too excited and never let the cat get an exact idea of your strength. All this kept in mind, they love to play with any kind of toy strong enough for their jaws. Lions are said to be the only naturally sociable wild cats, so enrichment and interaction tend to be much easier than with other species since the fear factor is never a problem. Once you discover their natural aggressiveness you must quickly learn how to turn their

jaws and claws away so that no bad behavior can be initiated. Leopards are a different story as they are much more nervous and have a natural tendency to ambush and pounce!

To me, cheetahs in spite of their size, act very similarly to smaller cats like the serval. They generally are cautious with human beings and much more mellow than most of the bigger cats. Their claws do not fully retract and are not very sharp which is very good when they catch your hand by accident.

I shall conclude my ramblings with my observation on the hyenas I met in South Africa. These guys have more the appearance of the canine family but genetically they are closer to cats. They are extremely clever and sociable but their jaws can apply a pressure per square inch between three and five times greater than the jaws of a lion. Biting even during play is an absolute no-no and so is trying to retrieve anything from their jaws.

My experiences with felines can be summed up this way: “Dare devil I am not, adrenaline junkie, perhaps I am!” My internships around the world will continue as I am scheduled to work as a volunteer before year’s end at Zoo Jihlava in Prague, Czech Republic. Maybe I will work in your cages some day if you will have me. •

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FCF Education—We Got You Covered Coast to Coast

The Feline Conservation Federation is continuing its efforts to educate owners and enthusiasts of exotic wild felines. The next Basic Wild Feline Husbandry Course is Saturday, February 17, 2007 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at the Best Western Hotel, 5188 Capitol Boulevard, S.E., Tumwater, Washington.

The following day students can tour Point Defiance Zoo in Tacoma, Washington. Point Defiance Zoo celebrated their 100-year anniversary last year. From the Asian Sumatran tiger, to Indian fishing cat, to the north's fabulous furry lynx, the Point Defiance Zoo has our cats covered.

FCF members should remember reading PDZ keeper Karen Povey's article in the January 2004 FCF magazine on the zoo's clouded leopard in-situ conservation project in Thailand as well as the birth and hand rearing of their very genetically valuable clouded leopard cubs.

FCF has arranged for husbandry course students to get a special behind the scenes tour of the Point Defiance Zoo's Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater, featuring rare felines like clouded leopard, fishing cat and Canada lynx. Then tour the zoo to enjoy the penguin display, the tundra display featuring musk ox, polar bears, reindeer, and the red wolf habitat, and much more. \$35.00 fee must be prepaid.

And if you prefer to take the husbandry course on the east coast—we have one for you!

Sign up now for our western Maryland class, scheduled Saturday May 12, from 8:00am to 5:00pm, at the Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo, 13019 Catoctin Furnace Road, Thurmont, MD 21788.

The Catoctin Wildlife Preserve is the lifetime project of FCF members Richard and Mary Hahn and is administrated by the Global Wildlife Trust, a not for profit 501(c)3 organization. Richard is also a volunteer member of the FCF Feline Facility Accreditation Committee.

After a day of learning, you are invited to return Sunday, May 13 to enjoy all the



sights and sounds of the preserve. Course participants, family members, and friends accompanying a student will be admitted at the children's rate of \$9.95 plus tax. All proceeds from the admissions will be donated to the FCF Conservation Fund.

Students visiting on Sunday will also learn from a special behind-the-scenes tour of the preserve's feline collection. Richard and June Bellizzi, the general curator, will share with students their knowledge of caging, husbandry, and exhibit experience to help

round out the previous day's FCF Husbandry Course curriculum.

Alligators, antelope, butterflies, bears, boas, kangaroos, kookaburras, lions, lemurs, llamas, macaws, mambas, macaques, puma, puff adders, pythons, tigers, jaguars and zebras are some of the nearly 500 exciting animals that you will see up close at this 35 acre and growing wildlife park.

Accommodations: There are three hotels in Thurmont, Maryland, just two miles north of the preserve. They are the Cozy Motel, upscale but reasonable, a

Motel 8, and the Rambler Motel. Eight miles north in Emmitsburg is a Sleep Inn and 12 miles south in Frederick Maryland are a dozen different national chains. Finally, 22 miles north in Gettysburg Pennsylvania are another dozen major chain choices. All of these locations are just off Route 15, a major four-lane US highway to the preserve's door.

Side trips: The Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo is only about 60 miles from the Baltimore, MD, Harrisburg, PA, and Washington, DC airports. Many Civil War museums and national parks are in the immediate 25-mile area including Gettysburg, Antietam, and Camp David. Baltimore's Inner Harbor and Aquarium, National Zoo, and the Smithsonian's many museums are all about one hour and 20 minutes drive.

Send your registration form and check for the course to the host address today. Spaces are limited. Make your check out to "Global Wildlife Trust." Or call the preserve at 301-271-3180 Ext 0 to use your credit card. And get ready for a really great time!

Both classes are \$65.00 FCF members, \$95.00 non-members. Contact FCF Director for Education Carol Bohning for more information. •



One of "serval" cats at the Point Defiance Zoo



Kashmir, golden tabby tiger at Catoctin Wildlife Preserve

Playa de Oro Report

November 2006

By Rosa Jordan, *Earthways Foundation*

A few months ago the people of Playa de Oro temporarily suspended ecotourism to the Reserva de Tigrillos. According to the mayor, ecotourism was not creating enough jobs or generating enough income to raise the people out of poverty and they wanted to reconsider their economic options. The option he favored was allowing a mining company to sluice for gold in the river which runs through the reserve. He had invited mining company representatives to make presentations to the community, and (we now believe) he didn't want tourists or conservation-minded outsiders around to talk about the down side.

So the mining company reps came and made presentations, in which they promised that, although they weren't offering anything up front, the people could rest assured that they'd find enough gold to make everybody in the village rich. But Playa de Orans were skeptical of the company's promises, and not as ignorant about the cyanide and arsenic contamination which results from such sluicing as the company had imagined. They listened politely, then "just said no." The mining company was told that under no circumstances could it operate in Playa de Oro territory. A new mayor takes office in January of 2007 who is much more conservation minded than the previous.

We were then notified that Playa de Oro intended to reopen the lodge, but with one change. Rather than a regular staff, the community has opted for a rotational staff, in order to spread what little work there is among more people. While this seems like a good idea in terms of income distribution, it probably wasn't the best decision business-wise, because frequent staff changes usually means inconsistency in services. Still, it's their lodge, and if they want to do it that way, it's their business. They assured us that they will continue to guard the Playa de Oro Reserva de Tigrillos and protect all species of jungle cats. Since our main concern is not the success of their ecotourism so much but the protection of wildcat habitat, we plan to continue to support the community's conservation efforts, with a small annual grant to the community (offered by Earthways), and ongoing support for the community's

schoolteacher.

PROJECT EXPANSION!

With the community taking charge of its own ecotourism and having proven its commitment to the reserve, the project's international facilitator, Tracy Wilson, is now able to devote time and resources to conservation efforts in nearby areas of the Choco Rainforest, where wildlife and wildlife habitat is in even greater need of protection. Her project base will be located at of the Kumanii Foundation's lodge, which is located on a neighboring river from Playa de Oro, the Rio Cayapas. This location is more easily accessible for travel, and has internet access for outside communication.

What was known as Earthways Foundation's Playa de Oro Reserve Project has now become the Choco Rainforest Protection Project. It will include Playa de Oro, but has expanded into a regional effort to include new activities in the rainforest areas adjacent to the Playa de Oro reserve. The goal is to help Playa de Oro's neighboring communities protect their forests as Playa de Oro has, which effectively will increase the Playa de Oro Reserve into a much larger protected area and will provide safe habitat for more wildlife.

Tracy Wilson, based in the US and sponsored by the US-based Earthways Foundation, and Alyssa Luboff, an American based in Ecuador and sponsored by the Ecuador-based Kumanii Foundation, will facilitate the project. Tracy will set up a wildlife rescue/rehabilitation/release program, located near the Chachi indian community of Loma Linda. (The area where the wildlife center will be located was visited in October by FCF members Donna Verba, Grace Lush, and Annette Lundberg—a trip which was enlivened by the first animal to be rescued—a baby two toed sloth whose mother had found her way into a native cooking pot.) Alyssa, meanwhile, will raise funds to set up food production projects as chicken-raising, fish farming, and gardening, to reduce local people's dependence on hunting.

Tracy has already hired staff for the wildlife center, which will focus on all native endemic and endangered wildlife

species, and is now fundraising for construction of facilities. She expects to have the center fully operational by the end of 2007. Alyssa expects to be showing results from her first community food production project by then, too. In November, a US biology grad student studying in Ecuador, began a wildlife surveillance project (utilizing the camera traps from Playa de Oro) on behalf of the Kumanii Wildlife Center, in the surrounding area to help establish the status of the wildlife populations. During his six week stay, he will train the wildlife center staff members in camera trapping protocol and data collection so that the research can continued for an extended time after his departure.

Then, the following year, Tracy and Alyssa will turn their attention to the creation of wildlife conservation programs for local schoolchildren, and will work together to get other communities to designate their territory as wildlife reserves. Each community collectively owns a tract of rainforest, some large, some small, but all in the thousands of acres. Most of these border either the Playa de Oro Reserva de Tigrillos or the Cotacachi-Cayapas Biosphere Reserve, so every section that is added will make wildlife, especially wide-ranging species like jaguars, pumas, ocelots, margays, oncillas, and jaguarundi, that much safer.

KUMANII WILDLIFE CENTER

Tracy Wilson is now seeking funds for the construction of three large enclosures at the wild rescue and rehab center. These first three enclosures are intended to be for native wildcats and primates. This is just slightly urgent, as Tracy had barely stepped off the boat in October to examine the proposed location of the center when she was handed a month-old baby sloth. A captive adult ocelot was also offered just days after her arrival. Since then two more sloths—mother and new-born, were delivered to her, and several spider monkeys have been offered to the center. Most of these animals only require a little "growing up," or tending till their wounds heal, then they can be released back into an area of the rainforest away from population centers where hunt-

Continued on 54

Miklos: The One and Only?

By Doug Dieckmann, Intern
Bear Creek Feline Center

On August 28, 2006 a litter of three beautiful and rare Gordon's cats (*Felis silvestris gordonii*), which is a sub species of the European wildcat, were born at Bear Creek Feline Center, Panama City, Florida. The wildcat family consists of the European wildcat, the African wildcat, and the Scottish wildcat. The wildcat is thought to be the ancient ancestor of the modern day house cat.

The Gordon's cats were a gift to Bear Creek Feline Center from Zoo Jihlava, Prague, Czech Republic. We have 1.2 (one male and two females) which were shipped to us in the fall of 2003.

We placed two kittens from the first litter with Shelleen Mathews who resides near Olympia, Washington. My kitten was from the second litter and is the star of this article.

Before sharing my extraordinary experience, I would like to thank Jim Broaddus of Bear Creek Feline Center for extending to me the opportunity to intern and gain valuable experience working with an assortment of lesser cats, and for having the confidence in my ability to domesticate one of these Gordon's kittens, which most likely is the only domesticated one in the United States.

I showed up the next day to view the second litter when they were one day old. What happened next totally surprised me. Jim asked me, when the kittens were 4 weeks old, would I be interested in taking one home as my own and attempt to domesticate one of these babies. Of course, I said "yes" without hesitation.

So now the game plan was in motion. I had 4 weeks to obtain my Florida Class III license, obtain all necessary hand-rearing supplies, and brush up on my knowledge on hand-rearing a kitten as it had been a long time since I needed to care for such a young kitten.

On September 17, the kittens were 3 weeks old. I arrived at Bear Creek to intern and Jim said today would be the day to receive my baby. The mother had started to neglect one of the males and Jim thought it best if I took possession that day. Jim pointed out the neglected kitten and discussed with me how we should proceed in removing this kitten from a much aggravated



mom. He was in control of a cardboard divider which he quickly but gently used to block her from the kittens while I moved at lighting speed to grab my baby.

I will never forget walking into my home with this kitten and my wife asking me "What did you do?" She had no prior knowledge of this plan derived weeks earlier. We recently acquired a Bengal kitten just a few weeks earlier and already had some domestic cats so I knew she would not be too receptive to the idea of bringing another kitten home, especially one that at that time we did not know if it could be domesticated and social with the domestic cats already in our household. Knowing my wife as well as I do I knew she couldn't help but fall in love with this baby as she is a real sucker for baby cats.

First thing was his first weighing, a real heavy weight at 9 ounces. The next thing was to give him his first bottle feeding. The first days were rough, as I honed my feeding skills. He quickly made me his mom as he learned to suckle the bottle, so we were off to a pretty good start. As the parents were from the Czech Republic, my wife went online searching for male Czech names for the new baby. We first chose Kazimir as his name (which means the great destroyer), but I didn't think it would be fitting for a domesticated cat, although it

would at times be most appropriate. We then chose Miklos (which is Czech for Nicholas.)

Miklos was making great progress. Having been with us for a week, he was already starting to bathe himself, follow the sound of my voice and shuffling of my feet, taking interest in the other cats, and playing with toys as well as showing a slight interest in solid food. I had much concern though regarding his vision. I am accustomed to domesticated cats being able to see well at 5 weeks of age, but Miklos' vision didn't really come in clearly until he was 7 to 8 weeks old. I am assuming this is may be a defense mechanism to keep him close to mom for protection in the wild.

When he was 8 weeks old I took him on his first excursion back to Bear Creek Feline Center for the afternoon where he was handled by 16 Girl Scouts. He was a real ham and really enjoyed all the attention





and was very gentle. That was the day I totally realized that this cat could truly be domesticated.

The other cats in the house, a Maine Coon, a Siamese, and a Bengal, were at first reluctant to accept another cat. Roscoe and Dusty, the Maine Coon and Siamese respectively, would sniff, turn their noses, run and hide. Jazz, the Bengal, also fairly new to our home, was hesitant at first but within days of his arrival, was bathing and sleeping with him and has become his best buddy and partner in kitten crimes. Over the past weeks, Miklos has learned to force himself on the other cats by pouncing, bathing, and cuddling to them, whether they like it or not. They are now all socializing together and joining in the fun.

He is extremely intelligent and has been answering to his name since within a week of being named. He frequently comes to you upon calling his name and is alternately affectionate, lovable, and as all kittens his age, extremely playful. He seems to really love my wife, snuggling in bed with her every night and chasing away the other cats in the house that also like to sleep on the bed. He has a fascination with water, jumps to the counter whenever the kitchen faucet is turned on, or runs to the bathroom

when the sound of running water reaches his ears. He's very fast, streaking through the house, loves to climb (especially to the top of the screen door when it's open) and like lightning to the top of the five foot tall cat play stand in our living room. He has the fastest paws I've ever seen on a cat his age. Determined to share dinner with us, he learned to leap at approximately 6 weeks of age when he flew from the kitchen counter to my wife's shoulder as we were having our meal at the table about four feet away and proceeded to jump to her plate. Although the effort of his amazing leap at such a young age was applauded, we of course, had to discourage him from joining us at the table to eat.

As of this writing Miklos is now 14 weeks old and weighs 2 lbs 10 oz. I would declare this cat to be truly domesticated and part of the family. He struts through the house with extreme confidence as if he was "king of the jungle" and shows every sign of believing that he is already the alpha male cat of the household. He is sociable with both human and other felines and frequently demands attention from us all. He is sweet, lovable, playful, determined, and every thing else and more that we've experienced with our other domestic cats.

Although he is litter box trained, this was somewhat difficult as he thought for a while that our carpet was the great outdoors. He does at times show signs of natural instincts for hunting as he has on multiple occasions tried to attack our pet parrots. Hopefully, he will learn as the other cats did that the birds are our friends and part of the family. It is now the holiday season and time for us to put up the Christmas tree, or should I say, a new playground for Miklos.

I foresee in the future, you will be reading more about this species in FCF newsletters as this breed becomes better known and available. Kittens from the next litter will be gifted to Deeanna Croasmun who lives in Nevada. Although these cats will be spread across the Country, (Florida, Washington State, and Nevada) it is our hope that in 2007 we can expect unrelated kittens to help make this species more prevalent in the United States.

I feel truly blessed my having Miklos as the one and only domesticated Gordon's cat in the United States who truly is a wonderful loving companion. Please feel free to contact me at my email address, DJD2713@aol.com if you'd like more information on Miklos's progress or the Gordon's cat species. •

Tiger Rescue! or Local Effort Pays Off!

By Carol Bohning and Evelyn Shaw

If you had asked Evelyn years ago, she would have said not to let anyone know what animals you own. After her servals escaped, her mind changed. She felt that if she had educated everyone back then she would not have gone through the nightmare that she did. During the ordeal, Evelyn began working with the public officials in my town, Pataskala, Ohio. She started with our mayor, law director, chief of police and council. Although the escape ended in tragedy, the educational work she undertook with the public officials and the police paid off later! She and supporters fought a city-proposed ban bill twice and succeeded because they had support from all the people with whom she had worked. She always went to the council meetings and worked on any projects she could, from tax levies to industrial parks. She attended the citizens' police academy and had the local police attend the FCF Feline Husbandry Course.

Everything was going well until this last November. Evelyn missed a council workshop and received phone calls later that night that the city was considering a new ban bill. Carol and Evelyn began making phone calls to find out the problem. Evelyn was advised that it was due to safety issues with two tigers and other wild animals that were held on a property within the city limits. Carol and Evelyn had met the owner a few years back. We contacted her and she allowed us to visit. Along with the two



Loading sedate female into cage

tigers, a cougar, two South American coat-is, several house cats and five birds were in desperate need of cleaner and bigger enclosures. The owner had been going through a long-term illness with her husband and he was dying. She was exhausted by the demands on her over the past several years and had little energy left for cleaning and repairs. The animals appeared to be mostly well fed, however, the tiger pen area was very muddy and very wet with up to 1.5-foot depths, and the cage itself was in poor repair and with no perimeter fence. The size of the cage mesh was large (cattle fence, 6" x 8") and was a huge safety issue for neighbors and children.

We started work on getting materials donated to fix the tiger pen and set up a weekend when we could bring in volunteers. Getting the cats up and out of the mud, fixing the fence mate-

rial and putting up a perimeter fence were identified as top priority. With this situation, it was no wonder that neighbors and the city were deeply concerned. A local company donated around 250 bags of mulch, and lumber and other building supplies were donated by 84 Lumber. Along with small piles of gravel and soil that were present on the owner's property, we had enough materials to last us through 2½ days of work. Many volunteers consisting of private animal owners from around the state, students from the Ohio State University zoology club and other interested parties gave up part or all of their weekend to make a difference. At stake were the welfare of the tigers and the attitude of a community towards private animal ownership. The work was backbreaking! Untold numbers of trips with three wheelbarrows were made constantly all day Saturday and Sunday, but by the end of Sunday, ¾ of the tiger pen was filled with soil, gravel and mulch, the concrete block house was cleaned of years of accumulated feces, etc. and a trap door was installed on the concrete house allowing for the cats to be locked out for future cleaning of the pen and house. A



Tigers in their original cage

door to the outside portion of the cage was also installed and repairs to fencing were made.

Prior to the work weekend and afterwards we spoke to every council member, other city officials and to the neighbor that made the complaint informing them of the steps being taken. We attended the next workshop. At a workshop you are usually not allowed to speak, but we were given the rare opportunity to comment. Thanks to Evelyn's prior work with the police force, Police Chief Forshey went out on a limb and said, "We do not have an exotic animal problem." He stated that we have two animal owners and one problem that he felt we were addressing. We were so thankful for his trust. The police department stood up for us and stated they would not enforce a ban. He addressed the fact that he can call us 24 hours a day and we will be there to help them deal with exotic animal issues. We have plans in case of any emergency and know how to handle any problem from escape to fire. It was incredibly nice to have them stand up and support us!

We knew we had to find another home for these two tigers, but where? Sanctuaries with tiger space are scarce as hen's teeth these days and I wasn't aware of any space in Ohio for these cats. Outside of Ohio, transport costs would escalate and the owner clearly had no funds to contribute.

Evelyn and I had been keeping Lynn Culver updated on this situation. Lynn offered to talk to her friend Joe Taft about taking the tigers at the Exotic Feline Rescue Center. I can't tell you how relieved I was when Lynn reported that Joe had space available due to a recent death of a resident tiger. He did however, need funds to transport the tigers to his place and he estimated the cost at about \$2,000 based on a recent trip he had made for the USDA to pick up cats nearby. Joe said he could put the expenses of a rental truck and lodging and gas and wages on his credit card and we had a month to raise the funds.

Lynn felt this was important enough to ask the FCF members for help. She had an idea on how to raise money. She wanted to find an experienced ebay seller and start an online auction to raise funds. She had even found the perfect person for the job, Sara Comstock. Sara was an established ebay seller with the needed experience and high ratings to give the store credibility and keep



Tiger ready for transport.

the store running properly. I thought the ideas were worth a try and so Lynn spent the next two days contacting every FCF board member and explaining what was going on in Ohio with these tigers and their needs. She gained authorization by the FCF board to send an email fund-raising letter to the members and launch an on-line ebay auction.

By the time we attended the next city council meeting, we were able to announce that all of the animals had been placed and that the tigers had been granted a home at the Exotic Feline Rescue Center in Center Point, Indiana. Huge thanks go to Joe Taft and his right-hand woman, Jean Herberg. When plans fell through for his sanctuary to move other cats to the EFRC one weekend, our transfer was moved up to a Tuesday morning. The city was informed that a team of professionals would be coming to transport the tigers and that news went a long way towards calming the local furor. The Butternut Farm Wildcat Sanctuary, operated by Carol, took in the cougar, the two coatis and the house cats, and these were relocated the weekend prior to the tiger move.

Jean and her staff from EFRC brought the truck and cages to Columbus the evening prior to the move, and along with substantial help from some Columbus Zoo docents and friends the next day, we eventually got the tigers loaded in about five hours. The male tiger proved to be the easi-

est to load, as he trusted his owner who talked him into the transport cage. By that time, however, the crowd's presence and all the activity had spooked the female and a great deal of time was spent in keeping folks quiet and out of the way in order to calm her down again. Although it was in everyone's best interest, especially the tiger, to not have to sedate the female, eventually that proved to be necessary. After a time, the female was able to be loaded without incident. Trying to keep the transport cages from falling off the hydraulic lift to the truck was another issue that was finally resolved with the use of major amounts of brawn, a few good brains and the marvels of physics. What a relief it was to see the tigers finally on their way!

Since the move took place earlier than expected, we are still in the process of recompensing the EFRC for their transport costs. We give huge kudos to the organizers and supporters of the fund-raiser auction on behalf of these cats. In spite of their living conditions, they are truly very nice, beautiful cats that chuff at everyone they meet. They certainly deserve such an excellent new home. It was with a great deal of pride that we were able to speak with council members and local authorities to give them a final update that the tigers and the other animals had found a home.

Since that time, there has been little mention of the proposed local ban bill. We were later informed that it was suggested to the city that with a state bill on exotic animal ownership being considered, perhaps the city should not go through the effort of establishing its own law, and instead wait to see what happens at the state level. The great thing here is that we showed that animal owners could be an asset to local officials when such problems come up. Many times problem animal owners can be more easily approached by other owners who can step in to help with improving caging and facilities and with cleaning. If the problem owners are approached by others who may have been helped in turn in the past, bonds can be formed and people helped and educated so that the animal's living condition or health can be improved. The tiger owner loved her animals more than anything and was comforted by their presence. When approached by the city, she became very defensive. But when helped over time by other owners, she allowed us to intervene

between her and the city. As a result, the threatened confiscation never took place. She did end up losing her animals as she was also losing the house where she and her husband had lived. However, she was given the opportunity to choose where they would go instead of having the matter taken out of her hands. She may have saved the life of her animals by not letting them get confiscated.

The effort to transport the tigers to a new home was successful and with the help and support of the FCF membership and the internet feline community, enough funds have been raised to pay the EFRC transport costs. The fundraiser letter to the members generated nearly \$1,000 in donations and the FCF Tiger Transport Fund Raiser ebay store has been a great success. Members have donated various feline and holiday theme items and FCF's corporate sponsors helped as well. Complete Natural Nutrition donated Apperon vitamins, ACE donated transport nets, meat sticks and a custom embroidered polo shirt, Pet Ag donated Milk Matrix, Jeffers donated egg and ball shaped toys, and Fuhman Diversified donated a gift certificate for a capture net. The ebay store generated more than a \$1,000 and extra funds are now being set aside to help the next cat in crisis.

It was also thanks to Evelyn who had spent much time talking and educating her local officials during her own crisis. By making them aware of her animals, she taught them better ways to handle an animal emergency and that they could work with her on any related issues. It is vital to become the solution rather than an issue. We have since worked with many other county sheriffs and law enforcement officers with supposed big cat sightings around the state.

Educate people regarding the laws in your area, local, state, and federal. Try to improve both your and your animal-owning friends' husbandry practices and learn to make suggestions to other people that get them to think about improving their animals lives and living conditions rather than having them become defensive at your intrusion into their business. Presentation is everything. Get them to share their views and learn what they are afraid of. *Educate* them and help them with the issues they face, such as funding. *Get involved!* It may save your own ass one day. •

The FCF ebay Fund Raiser Store

By Sara Comstock

I have been an ebay seller since 2001. I have been selling items and sending the profits to various sanctuaries here in the United States and to several reserves over in Africa. Lynn Culver called me and discussed with me ideas to raise some money quickly to help transport the two tigers (mentioned in this issue) to a safe haven. My only thought at the time was to open an FCF ebay store and to start collecting the funds as private donations. I already established ratings within the ebay community, so I offered my services to help. Little did I realize how we, as a big cat group, would show such compassion towards the needs of these two tigers.

I have never seen such a collection of caring people, who have not only contributed items but who have also won items. Compassion amongst the exotic feline enthusiast is overwhelming. I have never been so overwhelmed with work, happy work. In conversing with several of the contributors, I discovered how they are willingly—no questions asked—donating items! I thought we would have a difficult time collecting items to auction off but instead we have been deluged with items continuously!

The some of the donors were Zuzana Kukol, a big cat owner; Cristine Fireheart, a spiritualist and healer donating her own time for winning bidders, and a special private donor parting with his precious feline print. And me, who kept on outbidding other ebayers to win exotic feline related items up for auction to place within the FCF ebay Fund Raiser Store.

I was in a bidding war with another

ebayer on one particular plate. I thought this other bidder was Kevin Chambers, hence his EBay nick was "chambers." So I started to outbid him feverishly, and kept teasing him that he was not going to win that item—I was! Well, I not only won the item, but I also got "pie in the face," because it was not Kevin Chambers! At the end of auction, the gentleman told me who he really was, and mentioned that if he made me to continue believe that in fact he was Kevin, I might have let him have the plate. He was wrong! We had a good laugh, and he learned a lot about our organization.

The companies and the corporations have also come together in donating their own items, Judy Jezl, from Animal Capture Equipment; Fuhman Diversified, Inc.; Peter Kauffman, Oasis; Debbie Hoffman, PetAg; Samantha Norsworthy, JeffersPet.

Soon, we were being watched by other ebay buyers and sellers wondering why our items were being auctioned so fast with so many bids, and why our items were receiving so many hits to be viewed. At first, there were many questions, in speaking with them, they mentioned that it was awesome to see how we come together and support one another. As one gentleman put it, "the camaraderie amongst you people is truly amazing."

By the way, Lynn was not going to allow anyone outbid her for that cougar shirt from Animal Capture Equipment! I tried my best to find someone to outbid her! Didn't work, she won it! We had several gorgeous feline plates that went for top dollar. It was great to sit and watch a bidding war on who was going to get one of those plates! •

As this article went to print, the other donors are:

Linda Damico
Robert Turner
Jean Hatfield
Mike & Mary Beth Pirrone
James Gunn
Nanette McGann
Betsy Whitlock
Vicky Keayhe
James Teague
Marcus Cook
Richard Hahn

Matt & Jeanne Baker
Phil Parker
Wayne Sluder
Angela Anderson
Gary & Hillary Horvat
Seth Langianese
Kathy Melko
John Chuha
Judy Berens
Connie Reih
Juddith Ann Hedderick
Brenda LaTorre
Sandra Nebeta
Gary Lyons





As we rapidly approach the New Year and a “new government,” our rights as responsible private exotic animal owners will be put to the test once again. As you well know this year has been anything but a cakewalk. With the less than accurate Associated Press releases and New York Times articles published in December only proves once again that our adversaries have already started to try and regain lost footing on the hill in the lame duck session which began on December 4 and will end when Congress adjourns for the holiday recess. This is not to be taken light heartedly.

With the large felines and primates as the primary targets, our adversaries have decided to broaden their scope to include rabbits, hamsters, iguanas, turtles, wallabies, kangaroos, parrots and deer in their press releases as animals that are very dangerous and that also spread numerous zoonotic diseases, even going as far as saying: “Exotic animals captured in the wild are streaming across the U.S. border by the millions with little or no screening for disease, leaving Americans vulnerable to a virulent outbreak that could rival a terrorist act.”

Articles like this that are published in major newspapers and magazines and read by the masses that are uneducated about exotic species of any kind only make our path more difficult. Make no mistake AR groups have developed a huge following by using these “scare” tactics to recruit their allies and members and most importantly, the members of house and senate whose constituents call them to express their concern about the so-called numerous zoonotic diseases that are spreading rampantly through the U.S.

Thanks to U.A.P.P.E.A.L.’s Federal Lobbying team, Mr. Bill Hanka, Sean Morgan, and Sara Stockdale who work tirelessly for us by meeting with key heads of the house and senate and also house and senate members, drafting letters and memos, attending committee meetings on Capitol Hill to express our opposition to the bills that affect us as responsible private owners. Hanka’s team created allies in the house and senate and also with heads of

committees for U.A.P.P.E.A.L.

Until this past legislative season, bills relating to exotic animal owners and their rights had gone through both house and senate unopposed, making them an easy win for the many AR groups and organizations. With the help of the Hanka team HR1329 (Captive Primate Safety Act), S1415 (Technical Amendment to the Captive Wildlife Safety Act) and bill HR5909 (Haley’s Act) lay in state in the appropriations committee, and have been since late July 2006 while other bills passed them by. A purposeful and tactful move initiated by one of U.A.P.P.E.A.L.’s allies. Another positive was the no omnibus bill announcement made by the Republican heads of Congress the week before the Thanksgiving recess. This also was an initiated move by some U.A.P.P.E.A.L. allies on Capitol Hill.

Although 1415, 5909, and 1329 are technically dead, there is still about a ten-day lame duck session for the end of the year, but we don’t foresee any resurrections on these bills until the new government takes over in January. U.A.P.P.E.A.L. and the U.A.P.P.E.A.L. federal lobbying team have already begun making plans and strategizing for next year and the new government. New allies will have to be made, new contacts established, and a whole new game plan devised. This takes time and money.

U.A.P.P.E.A.L. needs your help in fighting for your rights. U.A.P.P.E.A.L. is successful because of the dedicated members and donations received throughout the year. No one group can afford to fight this battle alone, but united under one flag, we can succeed.

Visit our website <http://www.uappeal.org> to fill out the online application. If you do not wish to become a member of U.A.P.P.E.A.L., your donation of any amount will be greatly appreciated. Donations can be mailed to : U.A.P.P.E.A.L., c/o Barbara Doherty, 23412 Hwy 107, Jacksonville, Arkansas 72076

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

Taking Care of Tristan

By Gail Laviola

For those of you who missed the Nov/Dec 2005 issue of the FCF Journal, Tristan, a 7½ year-old Bengal tiger and I moved from Florida to Arkansas in November 2005. This last year started a new chapter in both our lives, a year filled with new experiences for Tristan.

Tristan moved into his new 1,300 square foot enclosure and found his familiar custom-made chair and bench already in place along with all his toys. He has three lounging tops, a bed, and tornado shelter. As far as his eyes can see, trees abound. When I



look out my bedroom window, I usually see him looking back.

Lynn and Bart Culver designed and constructed the enclosure with ecology and safety in mind. They also constructed the perimeter fence that encloses 13,000 square feet.

We were here for only three weeks when we had an inch of snow. Now Tristan wasn't sure what all this falling white stuff was so to be safe he stayed under cover on his lounging platform. When I came out and started picking up the snow and throwing it, he cautiously ventured down. And then the fun began... I ran around the enclosure and he quickly followed suit and made tiger angels in the snow. Because of the cold winters, Tristan decided sleeping in his cedar shaving-lined bed wasn't a bad deal. Bales of hay for insulation surround his bed and he often sleeps in on a rainy day.

Spring brought about wonderful bird life. Bluebirds nested right next to his enclosure. American goldfinches, Carolina chickadees, woodpeckers, and cardinals were faithful visitors to the feeders. But the hummingbirds doing their swan dives inches from his face are his favorite. Their airplane-like flut-tering fascinates him. A garden of herbs inside his enclosure provided spearmint, parsley, and peppermint as an after dinner treats.

Tristan watched with real interest as 7½ tons of sand was brought into the larger portion of his enclosure. Cypress mulch is kept on the smaller side. He had been keeping a watchful eye on the progress of his bathing tub being painted and was quite annoyed when this big round tub painted with fish was added to his possessions. He hissed and he growled and he swatted and after about two weeks he decided it was pretty tempting and started spending much of his summer days lounging about in his tub.

The fall brought many leaves landing inside his enclosure. Leaves falling, he wasn't sure about those and unlike the snow, he waited for maid service to remove them on a daily basis. This was the first year that Halloween pumpkins were carefully placed throughout. He had a great time pushing them, carrying them, drowning them in his pool, and eventually finishing them off on his highest shelf.

Although Tristan is an adult, he plays with all his toys, which include a big Boomer ball, heavy-duty plastic barrels, and an elbow tube. Once a week, he gets a cardboard box to rip to shreds, which he considers a great treasure.

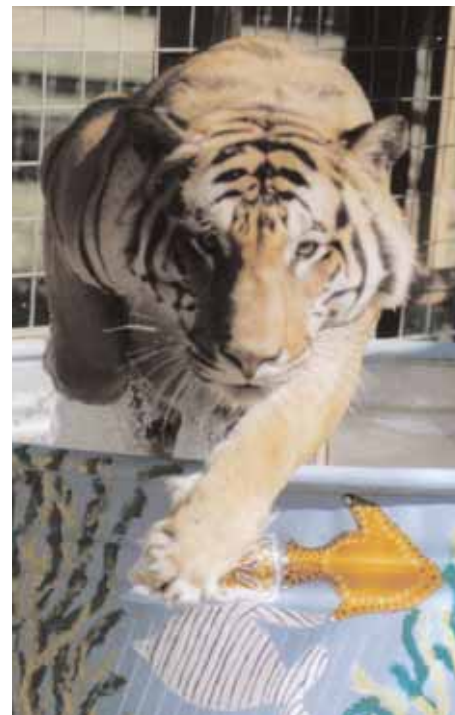
In the spring his 6,000 square foot exercise area will be constructed. The exercise area will encompass many interior tress and a grass covered earthen mound/viewing area, with a backdrop of bamboo.

Chateau Safari is a USDA exhibitor-licensed facility. We do educational tours as well as private photo shoots of not more



then two photographers per shoot. Educational tours are conducted outside the perimeter fence. Sadly, times have changed and legal responsibilities overshadow a desire to let clients look more closely. It seems evident that the present liability system holds the owner completely financially and legally responsible if a visitor ignores written and verbal instructions and violates the cat's space and gets injured. I believe constant vigilance when clients are inside the perimeter fence is mandatory.

It did take Tristan quite a while to adjust to being an only cat. He always had cat company and welcomed playful runs with his best friend, Amos, the most wonderful black leopard in the whole world. I, too, miss many of the cats I had come to love.



His diet has been expanded to include deer and horsemeat, which he considers a great delicacy. He also partakes in chicken thighs and beef. He's served 18 pounds in the cold weather loaded with vitamins, and 12 pounds in the summer.

Obviously, it is physically much easier to care for one cat rather than many. I still bleach, scrub, rake, pick up, and change water every morning. Food preparation is also far less time consuming with just one cat but the responsibility and commitment is the same whether you have one or one hundred. When an individual makes the decision to obtain a big cat, it is a lifetime commitment, not your lifetime, but theirs. They will grow from cuddly little cubs to

550-pound eating machines who require safe, decent size enclosures, but most of all, they require time—time to build bonds that may one day save your life if you interact with them.

From the first day I started interacting with the big cats, my dream has been to have one cat on my own property. It took 13 years but I am living my dream and I know I am blessed, that I must have done something right in this world, to be so very fortunate.

I have watched Tristan grow from a tiny cub to a tiger in his prime and hopefully, I will get to see him grow old never knowing fear of man or beast.

Would I do it all again? Absolutely.

Have I never had any regrets giving up some material things in life to keep Tristan? Never.

I have gotten more joy from him than anything else. I consider it an honor and privilege to have shared my life with the cats who had passed on and the one remaining with me. He is the light of my life.

This move would never have been remotely possible without the help of Lynn and Bart Culver. I can never thank them enough for the beautiful enclosure they built and all their help making me feel welcome in this lovely town. They are honest, decent, caring people. I value their friendship and I have a tremendous amount for respect for them. •

First Facility Earns FCF Accreditation

By Dr. Bhagavan “doc” Antle

I have recently been appointed as a member of the FCF Accreditation Committee. I wanted to join the committee to be able to share my experience and knowledge of exotic cats with the other members of the FCF as well as other enthusiasts. I feel that it is very beneficial to work as a community to manage and care for the exotic cats. This gives me a great opportunity to support the excellent standards in feline facilities and management practices of accredited facilities. I am happy to say that we already have accepted our first FCF accredited facility, Chateau Safari, owned and operated by Gail Laviola.

One of the great privileges of living in the United States is the right to maintain a private collection of exotic animals. We have been working with animals and including them as part of our lives. It is part of our history and our heritage. We rejoice in our freedom to do this and we hope to share this experience with our family and friends for generations to come.

The public concept of what we are doing has unfortunately changed throughout recent time from one of personal freedom and rights to one of fear and protection. Negative experiences have caused the public and hence the governing body of the public to place more pressure on our activities with our animals. If we want to continue enjoying our close bonds with our exotic friends, we must prove once more to the

public as well as to the government that we are working hard to provide not only good lives for our animals but also to ensure the safety of people around the animals.

The FCF accreditation is one way I believe we can prove our commitment to both the public and the government. The FCF accreditation certifies excellent standards in feline facilities and management practices. A safe, healthy cat is a direct product of good management, responsible husbandry, and continued learning. Accreditation provides a seal of approval that that the person meets or exceeds the standards and is qualified to provide a safe and productive home for their cats.

The accreditation process is very simple and does not require much time to complete. It allows us to quickly see which facilities are above par and which might

need a little help.

By becoming an accredited facility, you will also be joining one of the largest communities of private exotic cat owners and facilities. You will have access to the vast knowledge of care, maintenance, and training as well as a place to discuss different approaches and ideas about your animals. By meeting the requirements, you are proving to not only a community of your peers but also to the public and the government that you are serious about your animals.

The requirements for accreditation are based partly on the federal regulations set for zoological parks. Both the public and the government are content with the husbandry and management of zoological parks and so should also approve of our accredited facilities as well.

The FCF is especially concerned with the need for assuring high standards of animal care, husbandry, and protection of the animals and the public. To retain our freedom, we must not give the government any more political ammo. The FCF accreditation is our preemptive strike to protect our rights to enjoy our exotic cats before those rights are taken away because of public fear and outcry.

If you have exotic felines, we hope that you all will join us by having your facility accredited ASAP. Together we can prove once more that we are a safe, caring community of animal professionals and enthusiasts. •





Meet the Accreditation Logo Artist

My name is Diane Elliott, I am a graphic artist living in Platte County Missouri.

I have been an exotic cat lover all of my life. My dream of owning one came true when my husband and I bought my bobcat Jazzy from Lynn Culver almost four years ago.

Jazzy has indoor/outdoor access through a sunroom at the back of the house and his behavior is almost perfect as bobcats go. He is almost four and has never peed in the house.

He is neither a biter nor a scratcher. Thankfully he has always sharpened his claws on his logs outside and never my furniture. He is a very loving cat; I come home every day to a series of chirps, purring, and head butts, along with a bath if he thinks I need it. He sleeps on our bed every night and cuddles next to us on the couch to watch T.V. I have left him alone in the house for hours and he has never torn anything up.

He does however have a passion for knocking things over and playing in the toilet. (I said almost perfect.) I have no pictures or knickknacks in my house and it is a strict rule that the bathroom door must always be closed and no pop can ever be left unattended.

A tree at Christmas requires military level protection measures. We turned our back one year and learned this the hard way. But the happiness he has brought to our home and hearts cannot be measured. Even when he does make a mess, all it takes is a few purrs and one look in those beautiful loving eyes and all is forgiven. I can't imagine my life without him. •



MINUTES - 2006 FOURTH QUARTER MEETING

Reported by Harold Epperson

President Robert Turner announced that the fourth quarter meeting would convene on 11/15/06 and adjourn on 11/30/06 and would be conducted in the FCF Forum.

Moved by Marcus Cook and seconded by Kevin Chambers that the BoD approve that the FCF obtain a permanent mailing address, with mail forwarding services. My suggestion is based on the following submission for review and approval: The FCF secure the services of the UPS Store, location in Washington DC. The contact address for the FCF would be: The Feline Conservation Federation, 2000 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington, DC. 20006. Three YES votes and six NO votes, motion failed.

Moved by Kevin Chambers and seconded by Carolyn Clendinen that we approve Jim Sanderson's conservation grant request for \$1000 for a survey of Bornean wildcats. Additionally, all other current conservation grant applications should be tabled and a committee appointed by Carol Bohning, FCF Director of Conservation and Education, to review the current and future conservation grant applications and to approve or deny them. Any unused 2006 budgeted and/or dedicated funds for conservation grants should be rolled over and added to those budgeted for 2007. This tabling action would not discriminate against either the Ocelot Recovery Team or the Cockscomb Basin Jaguar Reserve for applying for an additional grant in 2007, should their 2006 applications be approved. Ten YES votes, motion passed.

Moved by Kevin Chambers and seconded by Marcus Cook that FCF should inform members, advertisers, etc. of our ability to accept payments of any sort by credit card. We should add a place on the membership form, renewal form, and convention registration form for members who wish to pay by credit card. When we have the new web page for joining and renewing, the credit card space should also be included as well. Ten YES votes, motion passed.

Moved by Evelyn Shaw and seconded by Robert Bean, to extend the meeting until

12/10/06. Eight YES votes, motion passed.

Moved by Marcus Cook and seconded by Kevin Chambers, that the FCF BoD approve the starting of the Registered Feline Handler program as in the first listed basic outline. The BoD can then work out the small details on processing of the applications, certificates, etc. Six YES votes, motion passed.

Moved by Marcus Cook and seconded by Kevin Chambers: In the recent months it may have appeared that there is a need for a professional audit to take place within the FCF. Due to the staff limitations and knowledge currently possessed within these ranks, and to better guide our growing organization toward the correct account path and correct procedures, I move that the BoD approve the employment of an outside accounting firm to conduct a professional accounting audit of our past and current accounting practices. Nine YES votes, motion passed.

Moved by Lynn Culver and seconded by Evelyn Shaw that FCF approve reciprocal advertising with U.A.P.P.E.A.L. in the two organization's publications. Nine YES votes, motion passed.

Moved by Lynn Culver and seconded by Bob Turner to ratify the BoD-approved funding to send two FCF members to the ZAOA conference and total expenses approved was \$750 to each person. Nine YES votes, motion passed.

Note: The following also were passed by unanimous consent. 1. Approve June special meeting minutes. 2. Programs and Policies update for the Conservation Grants

Program 3. Approve convention BoD meeting minutes 4. Approve convention BoD special meeting minutes 5. Approve convention membership meeting minutes.

3. FCF Wild Feline Conservation Fund

3.1 Purpose/Scope: The FCF Wild Feline Conservation Fund provides researchers and project facilitators with the opportunity to request funding for in-situ or ex-situ conservation research projects that will benefit felid species, their long term survival, or their habitat. Proposals should initially be in the amount of up to \$2000 per year. Acceptance of a proposal for funding is dependent upon the review and acceptance by the FCF Conservation Committee based on cost effectiveness, cost sharing, and ability to achieve objectives.

3.2 Guidelines:

a. Conservation effort should have one or more components of habitat/species preservation or protection, ecosystem or species research, or environmental education/awareness. The project should relate to wild felines and effectively strengthen the mission of FCF.

b. An FCF Conservation Committee member should serve as the liaison for the project by maintaining correspondence with the principal investigator or other appropriate person(s).

c. With long-term projects such as park/preserve management, research, or education outreach, a specific aspect that needs funding should be identified.

d. Projects may be local, national, or international in scope and location.

e. The funded portion of the project

should be completed within one year of receiving funds. However, no-cost extensions will be considered under reasonable circumstances. Projects that continue for several years may receive funding for additional years but a new proposal will be required each year.

f. FCF must be acknowledged in any publications or presentations that result from the project. The FCF also reserves the right to publicize the financial support of recipients and their projects in FCF publications and in the media.

g. Funding submissions will be reviewed by the FCF Conservation Committee and their recommendations presented to the FCF Board of Directors for final approval at quarterly intervals throughout the year during regular quarterly FCF board meetings. Completed applications must contain the application form, itemized budget, curriculum vitae for the principle investigator, and letters of support.

h. Submissions should be sent to chairman of the FCF Conservation Committee.

i. Recipients of FCF grants are requested to submit a final report or a year-end report in the case of long-term projects.

j. The FCF should be provided with copies of any publications on the project upon request.

k. An article of 500 words or more about the project should be submitted by the principal investigator or other appropriate person for publication in the FCF membership journal. This article should accompany the funding proposal and is meant to familiarize the FCF membership with the project

SANDUSKY

by John Prengaman



before funding is approved. After funding is granted, another article should be submitted giving the results of the project. Updates about the project through the year for the journal are appreciated in order to keep the membership aware of the project and its progress.

1. Failure of recipients to meet any requirements of the FCF Conservation Fund process will not be eligible for future funding. Recipients of the FCF Conservation Fund are only eligible for one grant per year. Being awarded funds does not guarantee funds will be awarded in future years. New applications must be submitted each year.

3.3 Evaluation: The proposals will be evaluated by each FCF Conservation Committee member by assigning a value from 1-5 for each of the following: Species focus relevant to FCF interests, endangered/importance of species, conservation value, significance to FCF membership, quality of proposal, effectiveness of the grant, feasibility, and appropriateness of budget. There is also a "pass/fail" category for the approval of the organization with which the FCF will be collaborating. The proposals with the highest mean scores and unanimous "pass" ratings will receive funding. Number of proposals funded and level of funding will depend on the number/quality of proposals submitted and may vary from year to year.

3.4 Instructions for filling out funding request form:

- a. Complete a title page
- b. Project Description

1) Summary: In approximately 500 words provide a brief overview of the proposal.

2) Introduction / Background: Provide relevant information relating to the project such as natural history of the species/region, historical data trends, and/or cultural relevance, citing specific sources to provide a framework for the review committee.

3) Objectives: Describe the purpose of the project and clearly state the goals that the project is seeking to achieve.

4) Methodology: When applicable, answer the following questions. How will the project be conducted? What research

methods will be used? What equipment will be required? How many staff and how much staff time is needed? How will the data be analyzed? Will the local people be involved?

5) Anticipated Results: What do you predict or expect to find or achieve during the course of the study, relating the anticipated outcomes back to the objectives?

6) Evaluation: Will an evaluation of the project be done? If so, who will do the evaluation? How will the data be analyzed? How will the progress of the project be determined: Using the calendar year, outline the steps to be taken for the completion of the project.

8) Rationale: What is the ecological, cultural, social, and/or economic significance of this project?

9) Budget: narrative and itemized

10) Supporting Materials

11) Curriculum vitae

12) Letters of Support: governmental, non-governmental organizations •

Playa de Oro, from 43

ing is not allowed. But the monkeys could not be accepted, nor the captive ocelot, simply because the facility is still in the planning stages, and hasn't been built yet! Tracy is also seeking people with knowledge of the various South American wildlife species that can help provide information to the wildlife center on captive diet and care information about species that are native to this area, especially for the native primate species.

Donations for the Kumanii Wildlife Center or for The Choco Rainforest Protection Project can be mailed to the nonprofit Earthways. Please mark donations for the project they are intended, and tax deductible receipts are available.

*Earthways Foundation
20178 Rockport Way
Malibu, CA 90265*

If you would like further info about The Choco Rainforest Protection Project, if you are able to offer assistance of wildlife care advice for the Kumanii Wildlife Center, or are interested in assisting in fundraising efforts, please email Tracy Wilson at tracy@touchthejungle.org or visit the website www.touchthejungle.org •

Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program **NEW!**

The FCF Registered Exotic Feline Handler program is designed to recognize those that handle such felines and to note their experience levels as well as provide the FCF a possible pool of information to maybe utilize as information resources. This is not a certification, but a registration program only.

The procedure is a simple one. An applicant will be required to abide by the following:

1. Submit an application to the FCF (Registered Exotic Feline Handler), and fill out all appropriate information.

2. Submit the completed application along with a \$30.00 fee to the Secretary of the FCF.

3. The applicant should be a current member of the FCF upon the time of the submitted application for Registered Exotic Feline Handler.

4. The Secretary will then exam the application to determine that one of the following is met:

a) For a Registered Exotic Feline Handler, the applicant should demonstrate that they have had a minimal of 2 years experience, up to 10 years handling such felines.

b) For a Advanced Registered Exotic Feline Handler, the applicant should demonstrate that they have 10 years or more handling such felines.

5. Once these basic requirements have been met, the Secretary will record the applicants registration and forward the acknowledgment of the registration back to the applicant. Such registration will be acknowledgment by a unique ID number.

6. At the next issue of the FCF publication, the Secretary will publish the names and experience level of registration that has been issued to applicants to the membership.

7. The registration is valid for a 12 month period and will expire during the 12 month following the issuance of the registration. The Secretary will send out a reminder to those registrations that are about to expire along with a new and/or updated registration application.

The cost for renewal is \$30.00 per year. •



Your best Shot



Counterclockwise from top left:

Fred Boyajian's Mr. Magoo relaxes while visiting Nancy Barter • Angel the Canada lynx—Lynn Culver • Steve Sipek's Stephanie the lion does some holiday decorating • Theirry Plaud plays with serval • Canada lynx, Trapper looks for his present—Nancy Vandermeij • Ginger Hemmah with Tres, Shirley Wagner's ocelot which now lives with Judy Berens post-Katrina



FCF Upcoming Events

Husbandry Courses:

Saturday, February 17, 2007 Washington. 8:00am to 5:00pm. \$65 FCF members, \$95 non-members. Mail check and contact info to FCF husbandry course host Terri Morast, P.O. Box 172, Little Rock, WA 98556. Location: Best Western, 5188 Capitol Blvd. S.E., Tumwater (Olympia area), WA. FCF price for rooms: \$69 for one queen bed, \$80.50 for two queen beds. Shuttle from SeaTac Airport available. Call 800-848-4992 or 360-956-1235. Ask to speak to Sharon and mention FCF to get special price.

Sunday, February 18 Students can spend the day at the Point Defiance Zoo and experience a specially guided behind-the-scenes tour. The cost is \$35.00 per person. Payment is due in advance.

Saturday, May 12, 2007 Maryland. 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. \$65 FCF members, \$95 non-members. Location: Catoctin Wildlife Preserve and Zoo. Registration: Mail check and contact info made out to FCF Husbandry Course host: Catoctin Wildlife Preserve, 13019 Catoctin Furnace Road, Thurmont, MD 21788. Questions? 301-271-3180 Ext 0. Lodging: See article inside this issue.

Sunday, May 13 Students are welcomed to the preserve to tour the 35 acre home to over 450 animals. Zoo founder and course host, Richard Hahn will share with students his vast experience in husbandry, management and cage design in a behind-the-scenes tour. Get in for kid's price: \$9.95.

July 26-28, 2007 FCF Annual Convention in Dallas, TX.



Tiger from Big Cats of Serenity Springs Winter 2005 Fundraiser. The forecast was 40°F and sunny. The actual weather that day was 25°F and near blizzard conditions. Photo by Valerie Vegoren

