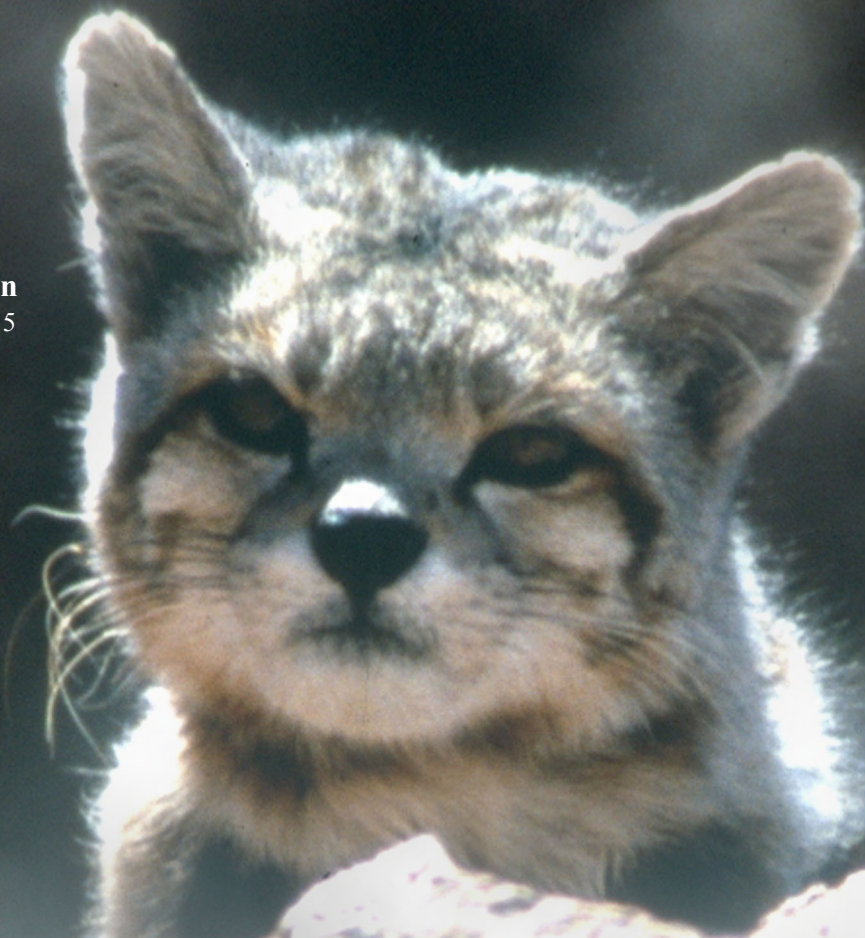




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One step forward for for the Andean Cat.



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TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE FCF JOURNAL AND JOIN FCF IN ITS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

A membership to FCF entitles you to six issues of this journal, the back-issue DVD, an invitation to the convention, and participation in our discussion groups. Your membership helps the conservation of exotic felines through support of habitat protection and conservation, education, and breeding programs. Send \$35 (\$40 Canada, \$50 international) to FCF, 4403 S. 334th E Ave, Broken Arrow, OK 74014

Members are invited to participate in email list discussions online at:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The_FCF

Cover: Charlie Sammut of Vision Quest Ranch rewards lion Jacob after he stands and waits on mark—Melissa Faust. **Inside:** Juvenile bobcat, Dufus. No, that's her name!—William Rainey.



This magazine is published bimonthly by 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 second Friday of even numbered months. Please submit all photos and articles to the editor. Persons interested in joining FCF should consult instructions on inside front cover of this journal.

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Letter from the President

Another FCF convention has gone by, leaving in its wake many smiling faces, new friendships, renewed friendships, and enough fond memories to hopefully last us until we meet again next year in Oklahoma City. I'd like to thank Dan Stockdale, Kate Kahn, Kurt Beckleman, Tim Stoffel, and all the others who put in so many thankless hours of work to make the gathering such a success. A special thanks goes out to Charlie and Heather Sammut for allowing us to visit their Vision Quest Ranch in Salinas, CA. Everything was so beautiful, including the weather. It was the first convention that I can recall seeing attendees donning jackets.

The crowning jewel of the convention for me was awarding a \$15,000 check to Dr. Jim Sanderson toward the Andean Cat Conservation and Monitoring Center project. Not only did our members step up to the plate and meet the challenge of raising \$5,000, you doubled that challenge. Over 80 FCF members donated and each and every cent is appreciated. It just goes to prove that a unified group, with each member doing just a small part, can accomplish a great deal. We had some members that gave generously large amounts. They are greatly appreciated, but so are the members that donated \$10 or \$20. It was the combination of these smaller donations that made up a majority of our total. This just goes to show that together, we can accomplish big things. We have only yet to begin.

I hope that we can use this momentum and enthusiasm to follow right on through with the African Safari Sweepstakes. So far, the number of tickets being turned in has been slow. I realize the economy is hitting everyone, but I still think that the goal of each member turning in just ten tickets is an attainable goal. If we can reach this goal, it will give FCF somewhere around \$75,000! The organization really needs this money in order to move forward and give you, the members, better service and added benefits. One again, a page of sweepstake entry forms is included with this journal. You can also print out the entry forms from the members-only section of our website www.felineconservation.org or contact Lynn. The website also has the rules and a downloadable poster that you can print out to help gain interest.

One of the things I really like to see this money used for is to retain a federal lobbyist

for FCF. With a lobbyist representing us in Washington, we could do so much more in protecting our rights to own these wondrous animals. I have heard that many pro-private ownership organizations are cutting back on lobbying activities because of the economy, while organizations like HSUS and PETA continue to pound the floors of our legislature trying to take away our rights. This is a serious situation and it is time that FCF steps up to the plate. Our only problem is funding. Lobbyists do not come cheap and we must raise several thousand dollars to make this become a reality. The FCF members have shown that they themselves are generous, as evidenced by the Andean cat fundraiser. While we will gladly accept any donations from members made specifically for legislative use only.

The African Safari Sweepstakes gives a perfect avenue to raise funds from outside our membership. Not only do we receive the money to make FCF better, the donation is tax-deductible. Besides that, some lucky person is going to win a trip of a lifetime. Do not forget that for every ten entries you turn in, you'll get a free entry for yourself. The person referring the most entries will receive free registration and hotel at next year's convention. Please use the opportunities you have at ballgames, fairs, family reunions, etc. to tell people about the sweepstakes and bring in some much needed money to use for our survival.

I would like to thank Dan Stockdale for his service to the organization. Dan resigned from the board in July. His consulting and speaking schedule had become very demanding and left little time to devote to the FCF. In addition, he is under contract to write another book before the end of the year, leaving even less time. We wish Dan well in his endeavors and I am sure we can continue to draw upon Dan's knowledge, as his time allows. You will see elsewhere in this journal a call for candidates to replace Dan's vacated Public Relations Director spot on the board. If you have any questions about the position, feel free to contact me. My contact information is on the inside cover.

The new Feline Educator's Course went well at the convention. We feel it is very important to help train our members on



how best to get the word out and educate the public. We will be offering educator's courses the same way we offer our husbandry course. You can host one and the profits will be split between you and the FCF. If you are interested in hosting either of these courses, contact Lynn Culver. These courses are great opportunities to gain knowledge and the more we can offer, the more informed we make everyone.

The FCF will have a booth at the Wildlife Conservation Network Expo in San Francisco on October 3. Jane Goodall will be the keynote speaker and our own Dr. Jim Sanderson will be speaking as well. For more info, visit the WCN website <http://www.wildlifeconservationnetwork.org>

I'd like to close with a question to you. An idea has been presented to me regarding the way we produce the FCF Journal. The idea is that we could send out the journal on CD instead of the printed version like you're holding now. If we produced the journal on disk, we would be green and save lots of trees used to produce the paper which would preserve wild habitat. The printing and mailing costs would be reduced, freeing up that money for other uses. In addition to the regular written articles, video presentations could be included. All of these possibilities are very intriguing to me and I could see it as another way for FCF to be cutting edge and lead the way. Of course there are downsides to this. I'm sure some members may not have access to a computer with a CD. It also just wouldn't be the same as being able to take the printed journal with you anywhere you want and sit back to read it. I'd like to hear the members' opinion on this. If we went this route, we would have to do it all that way. To produce just a few printed copies would be cost prohibitive. Contact me and let me know your thoughts on this. The board has to consider everyone's opinion in order to do what's best for the organization as a whole.

—Kevin Chambers

From the Executive Director: Securing Our Livelihoods and Our Felines

Help! FCF is growing.

FCF is widening *its* base. I will be busy fund raising and grant writing and capacity building to bring us into a secure future. But the wild feline community is outnumbered and out-financed by organizations that seek to destroy us. We are facing threats that have the potential to make us the last generation of feline handlers.

Just a few months ago, we began the process of transition from an all-volunteer organization to a professionally run organization. Your association needs *you!* We are looking for a team of volunteer leaders to help in this transition process. As your executive director, as your past board chair, I need help now. I need honest, reliable people I can call upon, with the ability to influence FCF members in an appropriate way.

This team will help our organization develop communication methodology that gets input from all the members and guides the board of directors. To accomplish this goal, I am forming a task force to help review our current operational structure and to propose any needed changes to create an even more functional board and operational structure. I want to have this task force working by this fall and ready to make proposals to the FCF board of directors by the first of next year. Call me now! Join me in this effort, to secure a stronger future for the Feline Conservation Federation and a secure future for our felines. Call me at 479-394-5235.

We have always had a wonderful board of directors. Now is the time to begin preparing our organization and its leadership for the future. We will be laying the groundwork for the next generation of the Feline Conservation Federation and strengthening our organization to respond to the needs of our members and of our felines.

Successful non-profit organizations depend on a board of directors that can concentrate on developing policies, budgeting, strategic planning, fundraising, human resources, program evaluation, and board development.

The Year in Review

It is a good idea to look back and review

the accomplishments of the Feline Conservation Federation this last year.

I am pleased to report that the FCF membership continues to hold at an all time high of around 800 members. In the first half of this year, the FCF has conducted three husbandry courses and successfully developed a Wildlife Conservation Educator Course that was taught at the 2009 convention. Since April, the FCF membership has raised over \$15,000 for the establishment of the Andean Cat Conservation and Monitoring Center in Chile. The FCF managed Rare Species Fund has contributed \$5,000 to this effort, and also sent \$2,000 of additional support to the Matabeleland Leopard and Cheetah Research in Zimbabwe and \$1,000 to tiger research in the Khao

Yai National Park in Thailand. The FCF board approved the conservation grants committee recommendations of \$1,400 to support Geoffroy's cat research in Argentina, and \$1,200 for predator conservation education in schools in South Africa.

This year the FCF made the first necessary transition for growth by hiring an executive director to implement most of the day-to-day responsibilities and oversee the efforts of its volunteers to insure that programs and services such as the journal, handler registrations, husbandry courses, annual convention, press releases, and FCF fund raising activities are successful, are accomplished on time, and maintain our quality control standards.

I have spent a good portion of my time



William Rainey

Bobby Woo bobcat relaxes in Lynn's arms while his companion Jewel leans over for a kiss. The adolescent bobcats were raised by the Culvers, but now reside at the Arkansas Native Plant and Animal Center outside of Mena.

as this organization's first executive director training our new officers to perform their bookkeeping and secretarial duties. I have filled in when the membership services director and education director needed family emergency leave. I have filled in when our public relations director resigned. I filled in when the convention chairman resigned. I filled in for the director of development, who has been unresponsive these past few months.

What lies ahead?

The FCF members have a lot to be proud of, however this organization needs to do much more and it is not as strong as it needs to be to insure that our livelihoods and our felines are safe and will continue to exist into the future. Just like the cats, we are now an endangered species. Our essential activities are under attack by power hungry fanatics and their ignorant following, which are working to outlaw our activities.

The FCF organization must step up its efforts to educate communities and legislators on the importance of protecting captive habitat and captive conservation. Each of us needs to encourage and mentor the next generation wishing to work with wild felines. And equally important, we must manage our feline genetics responsibly to insure that these species survive for future generations.

How do we tackle these big goals? FCF must be a credible source of husbandry knowledge and an important component of feline conservation.

For FCF to reach its full potential, it will require a larger membership, more funding, and a brighter spotlight shining on the FCF and its members. *It's going to take all of us to build this organization to the next level.* Here is how you can help

Help us grow. Take that brochure we included in your last journal and give it to a volunteer, a kitten customer, a relative, or member of the public and ask them to join.

Make it *your* personal commitment to sign up someone.

In this issue you will read about the FCF social networking web sites MySpace and Facebook. Take the time to join these sites and refer others.

Help us raise funds. I want each of you to sell a page of four African Safari Sweepstakes tickets, and the money we raise will be put to work for you by supporting the FCF organization.

Get active in your local, state and national politics. Let me remind you, the wild feline community is outnumbered and outfinanced by organizations that seek to destroy us and all it takes for them to be successful is for good people to do nothing. I am not ready to give up the fight and admit defeat because our mission is too important to abandon. FCF members have an important role to play in conservation, we have a purpose in life, and our ambassador felines are worthy of our protection and our sacrifice. We owe it to them.

—Lynn Culver

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What Downturn?

FCF Raises the Conservation Funding Bar

Dr. Jim Sanderson

The FCF annual event in California was the most successful fundraising event ever held. At a time when unemployment is rising, the number of home foreclosures is setting new records, and any news other than bad news is considered good news, FCF members reached down deep and came up with a fist full of dollars for in situ conservation. This sends a powerful message that FCF members are willing to back up their talk with actions. Those that said our organization should do more for conservation should instead consider joining sides with FCF.

FCF has come a long way, and there is still further to go. However, this event was a watershed, bold step up from past events. Mindy Stinner and Tom Harvey gave outstandingly optimistic and entertaining presentations whose impact I could see in the faces of the guests that joined me at the event. Henceforth, I think I'll have to present first or last. Dale Anderson's talk on the importance of in situ conservation did not fall on deaf ears. Indeed, he too might have been surprised by the generosity of our membership. For those still sitting on the fence, it is time to consider joining FCF's growing ranks. It is a lonely battle when you go it alone in today's increasingly complex world. I urge you to sign up with an organization whose collective

membership has real clout.

It's been said that people will not save what they cannot see. I guess these naysayers have not been to one of our annual events. What makes FCF members' generosity even more impressive is that it supports work on species that they are unlikely ever to see in person in the wild! But let's not ever forget that each and every cat held in captivity acts as an ambassador for those of its kind struggling against increasing odds to survive in the wild. Each and every person that visits an FCF facility should walk away with an enhanced personal commitment to conservation not just for the species they saw, but for all those they did not see. Just as Mindy asked, where else can a visitor get such personal attention, even at 8:00am, Sunday?

In the coming months I'll be working on several projects with colleagues around the world. One of these projects is, of course, the first Andean Cat Conservation and Monitoring Center to be constructed in San Pedro de Atacama, Chile near the Bolivia and

Argentina border—a hot spot for Andean cats. When we have the center operational, I expect that all the members of FCF will stop fondling that Andean cat plush toy and decide to see the real thing. With luck, my colleagues and I will capture a few individual Andean cats and fit them with radio-collars. If so, then I can guarantee you will see one up close and personal just as I did.

Please accept my sincere appreciation to all FCF members for a fundraiser that beat all others. •



Basic Exotic Feline Husbandry Course Review

By Kim West

I am a native Californian and have always had a passion for wildlife, especially exotic and native cats. Seeing how Californians are profoundly ill-informed, or come to their own conclusions without knowledge and facts in regards to responsible exotic ownership, I felt I could help by becoming a wildlife educator and USDA licensed exhibitor with the help of my feline ambassador Ziyad, a F1 savannah. I speak to the younger generation not only about cats, but also about native wildlife and conservation that starts in their own backyard. These kids are sponges. The more questions I get at the end of my presentation the better my presentation was. I

know I got their wheels turning and that is what it is about—the next generation.

I knew the feline husbandry course was going to be a long day. It is not that I wasn't looking forward to it. It is just the simple fact that it was a crash course, and having to spend ten hours being instructed (minus lunch and two breaks) and then be expected to regurgitate what I learned on a 50 question test was a lot to take on.

Passion for cats runs through my blood so I was excited like a little child waiting to get on a carnival ride to take this husbandry class. Retaining learned information is much easier when you have an instructor that makes it interesting, funny, thorough, and last but not least, simple.

The class touched bases on things I already knew and what I did not know. Regardless of whether you are exposed to new information or it is a refresher, I believe you keep learning. When all was said and done at the end of the day, (or should I say evening?) my mind was exhausted, tired, and drained. My brain felt like mush. I took a deep breath and felt as if a weight was lifted off my shoulders after I learned that I had passed my test. In fact, every student passed, a testament to our instructors' skill at teaching the FCF Basic Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry course.

Kudos to both Mindy Stinner and Lynn Culver for their excellent delivery of this course at the convention. •



Convention Review

By Tim Stoffel

I don't know how they keep doing it.

The 2008 FCF convention was the finest of all the conventions I have attended up until 2009. How can one top 2008's encounter with a liger, many other wonderful cats, birds, primates, and an elephant?

When the news that the 2009 FCF convention was to be held at Vision Quest Ranch in Salinas, California, I was both excited, and a little bit sad. Vision Quest Ranch had been home to perhaps the most famous lion that has walked this earth in recent years. This was Josef the lion. Josef died of very old age last year, and I had been remiss in not visiting him while he was still alive. But even so, Vision Quest Ranch would still be a very special place for a convention and I am sure I would "feel" Josef everywhere. Well, my expectations were met and then some. A whole lot of then some!

Some last minute service to my car and a zillion little errands had me off to a late start on Wednesday, July 22. But it was an easy drive for me, and it was still light out when I arrived in Salinas. I went into the hotel lobby, only to find a friend there from last year's convention, Angela Anderson. From that moment on, everything just clicked.

I quickly learned that another good friend, Mike Friese, was in the room next to mine. After unloading my luggage into my room, I visited Mike. Soon, Mike, Angela, and I found ourselves in Lynn Culver's room. That would turn out to be a key meeting point for the entire convention.

Lynn had some baby Geoffroy's cats with her, which we all enjoyed playing with. As we played and talked, more and more people filled her room. Before long, we had worked out a dinner plan. So, with those of us who had vehicles carpooling,

we trundled off to dinner at a nice Italian restaurant. Many people I knew were there, including a few I did not remember from last year. There were also new faces there I had not met before. One person I ended up getting to know better was David Sol from the Exotic Feline Foundation of America. He was wearing the uniform from his facility, which featured an unusual American flag where the stars were leopard spots, and the stripes were tiger stripes. The motto below the flag was "Spots and Stripes Forever." A good motto to live by!

Thursday morning was the board of directors' (BoD) meeting. This was almost always interesting to attend. Showing the ongoing maturing of the FCF, the BoD meeting was much more calm and orderly than I had ever remembered. Many people observing the BoD meeting had their computers with them, and were either taking notes or doing some other work. I went

Mike Friese

through a large collection of photos that needed ordering, all the time listening to the meeting.

Afterward many people from the BoD meeting ended up going to the restaurant that was part of the hotel complex. We continued the discussions we had been having earlier, over lunch.

After lunch, we went back to the hospitality room, which was now much larger, having been opened up after the BoD meeting. There were tables set up that were quickly filling with items for FCF's annual fund-raising auction.

For me, this is where things began to get interesting. I was taken aside by Lynn Culver and asked if I could make heads or tails out of the spreadsheet that had been developed to track auction items. Wanting to be useful, I took this task on. It kept me quite busy. I worked on it much of the afternoon and early evening, with little luck. It would be Friday night before I had everything working as it should. In the process, I ended up becoming the Auction Data Wrangler.

As the afternoon slowly turned into evening, many more people arrived. And so did the cats. Mike Friese brought his Savannah cat, Lynn brought two black Geoffroy's, and Jill Galindo's spotted Geof-



Charlie Sammut wrangles a tiny cougar as Tony Richards looks on.

froy was there. Also present was a baby cougar from Vision Quest Ranch. Vision Quest also brought a Siberian lynx plus a serval which demonstrated for us just how long a serval's body really is. There were plenty of snacks and drinks. I started the long task of entering the data for each auc-

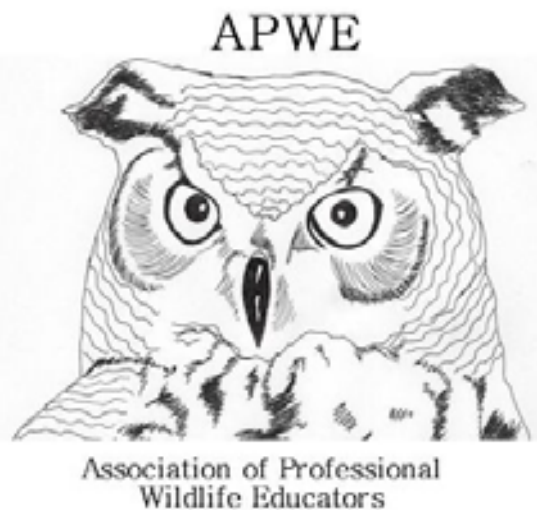
tion item.

Doc Antle showed up with a surprise. He is producing a beautiful book, entitled *Portraits of Tigers*. He brought with him a special FCF 2009 commemorative edition of the book, limited to ten copies. They included many additional portraits of lions, tigers, and leopards. These were available to anyone who made a \$200 contribution to the FCF Rare Species Fund. Doc was immediately inundated by people wanting this special book.

Then, the general membership meeting began. Unlike previous years, this meeting was fairly short and uneventful but it was a good meeting nevertheless.

After the meeting concluded, a controversial new documentary entitled *The Tiger Next Door* was screened. This documentary, telling the story of tiger keeper Dennis Hill, will require us to once again defend our position as responsible owners/keepers when it airs nationally next fall.

Following the screening, a very interesting and educational discussion ensued, concerning the issues we all faced and how to mitigate them. This discussion was anchored by Charlie Sammut, owner of Vision Quest Ranch (and Josef the lion's best friend). This discussion went on quite late, but even then the night was not over. Many of us stayed and talked for hours. The night finally ended with Mindy Stinner and myself trading our lion pictures with each



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Melissa Faust

Joan Rubano pets Nadia, a Siberian lynx.

other

The air was electric with anticipation Friday morning as we all got ready to board the bus for a tour of Vision Quest Ranch. I elected to stay behind a few minutes and take any latecomers in my car. Instead, I ended up riding with another couple who thought I was a straggler!

Vision Quest Ranch turned out to be a real treat. After watching a video detailing the history and mission of the facility, we toured the facility. There were all sorts of animals to see: small primates, a hyena, and lots of cats. Of course, the ones I remember the most were the two lions. One of the lions was a magnificent male named Jacob. He was Josef's distant cousin, and you could sense a little of Josef in this gorgeous cat. The other lion was a young male named Lucas. Lucas was Josef's official replacement. Lucas had lots of cub left in him. Charlie Sammut pointed out that you need to let the big cats "enjoy their childhood" before beginning training, and that would help the training be fun for the cat later on. It was also revealed to us that Lucas was the lion cub we had all played with last year at Doc Antle's place in Myrtle Beach. I actually had a connection with this delightful young lion which has such big paw prints to fill!

We were introduced to a pair of tigers, one which has distinctive star markings above each eye. This particular tiger, named Kolar, is one of the most (profes-

sionally) photographed tigers in the world.

After the wonderful cats, we were taken to the back of the facility where the current big project was taking place—the E.A.R.S. elephant sanctuary.

As we went along on the tour, Charlie went out of his way to point out how they had built many parts of the ranch on a shoe-string, with such things as used fence, unwanted new steel buildings, and thousands of feet of pipe from a demolished building. All through the park were signs of creative fundraising.

After being introduced to the elephants, the elephants were walked into a large yard where we had something rather unprecedented—free contact time with the elephants. Everyone had a wonderful time in and around the elephants.

An excellent lunch was served to us in a large tent that would be the site of Saturday's activities. After the lunch, we went back to the hotel for an afternoon on our own.

On the way out, a few of us stopped at Josef's grave so we could pay our respects to this wonderful and gentle "king" who in Charlie's words, "built Vision Quest Ranch." Josef's final resting place is marked by a simple iron silhouette of a lion—the very symbol that came to represent this famous lion and that is everywhere throughout the park. That was all the marker this sacred spot needed. There was also a bench there, shaped like a lion, for Charlie

to sit on and spend time with his very special friend.

That evening, we had another long night in the hospitality room. While I continued to work on the auction, another video was shown, entitled *Cat Dancers*. This was a retelling of a gruesome incident where a tiger killed two people—one of them completely needlessly—about ten years ago.

This night also ended very late. There were long talks with friends old and new. Although tired when I went to bed that night, it was a good kind of tired.

Saturday was the traditional presentation day of the convention, and consisted of two sessions. The first was a series of lectures on various cat topics. The second would be a demonstration of cat handling techniques by Charlie Sammut for those who were FCF Registered Exotic Feline Handlers.

The educational sessions opened with an excellent presentation by Mindy Stinner of Conservator's Center in North Carolina. It was titled *Managing Your Public Image—Positive Press and Proactive Publicity*. It was a comprehensive look on how to maintain a positive spin on things by



Jim Sanderson

Kennon Dickson-Hudson cuddles Jill Galindo's Geoffroy's cat.

managing your facility properly and controlling the situation should there be a problem.

Tom Harvey gave the next paper, entitled, *Never Give Up, Never Surrender*. Last summer, things looked very bad for Tom and his facility, Safari Zoological Park in Caney, KS. Then a miracle, followed by some well-done PR work, catapulted his facility, a dog, and three tiger cubs into sudden fame. This was a stirring paper encouraging us to keep up the fight, no matter how bad the odds. Tom also sold many copies of his children's book about his tiger-raising dog, entitled, *Tiger Pups*.

Long time favorite FCF presenter Dr. Jim Sanderson gave a paper entitled *Conservation of Wild Cats: A Historical Perspective*. Ranging far wider than the title suggested, Dr. Sanderson also looked at the conservation status and programs of many small cat species that were in danger. Much of the presentation covered his work with the Andean cat. To help raise funds for his research, beautiful plush Andean cats were available to anyone who made a donation of \$125 or more.

Liz Hatton gave a presentation entitled *Utilizing Internet Social Networking Sites*.



Melissa Faust

Dr. Marty Dinnes of Natural Balance shares some stories from his most varied career as a veterinarian.

This was a nuts-and-bolts presentation on how to use social networking tools like YouTube and Facebook to promote respon-

sible feline husbandry and conservation.

Dale Anderson and Wendy Debbas of Sierra Endangered Cat Haven, gave a



Charlie Sammut and lion Jacob put on brief training course for Registered Handlers who observe behind a chain link barrier fence.



thought-provoking paper talking about the need for conservation in the wild. Entitled *Hear Them Cry: Conservation Starts With You*. This paper showed that conservation in the wild is being too frequently overlooked today.

The final paper was given by Martin Dinnes, DVM, of Natural Balance Zoological Formulas. His paper, *40 years of Zoological Medicine* outlined his long experience as an exotic animal vet, especially with marine mammals. Describing some of his stories as “interesting” is an understatement!

Lunch was then served. Like the day before, it was very good. After lunch, the bus took those who were not registered feline handlers (not very many) back to the hotel. A few people signed up as new Registered Handlers.

The Registered Exotic Feline Handlers were treated to a wonderful demonstration of big cat training. The cats used were Jacob and Lucas the lions. I was in lion heaven! Although Jacob was well trained, Lucas was just beginning his training. It was only his third day. And despite wanting to play a lot (which he did), he did do what he was supposed to do. Equipment, feeding techniques, conditioning techniques and a lot of love for the cats was demonstrated for us. Although no one there could claim to have been trained as a handler, we all now have a much better idea of what is involved in big cat training.

After the training demonstration, we went

back to the hotel to get ready for the banquet. As usual, I donned my kilt. Needing to be at the banquet early to get the silent auction going, I drove back to the ranch and went right to work. The banquet was in the big tent. I ended up being busy with the auction for the rest of the night!

While I was busy setting up the silent auction items, and the display area for the live auction items, I watched as an elephant was brought into the tent. Lots of people got to feed the elephant and have their picture taken with it. Even though I was busy working, I enjoyed talking with many of my friends.

The silent auction ended just before din-

ner time, and I became quite busy figuring out who had won what items. I then began creating invoices for people, to try and get ahead of the onslaught that would occur after the live auction.

I enjoyed dinner with Kurt Beckelman and Kim West. Like all the meals, the food was very good. As people were enjoying their dessert, the live auction began. I was soon at work, printing invoices. Kurt was alongside me, taking money for the items that people had won. The auction concluded with two of the Doc Antle’s tiger portraits books, each garnering \$500!

At long last, I finished doing everyone’s bills, and began the long task of packing up all the stuff I had used to do the auction paperwork. I was one of the very last people to leave.

But, this long day was not over. A party had started in someone’s hotel room. I went there and talked with many different people for a long time, including my good friends Scott Shoemaker and Zuzana Kukol. This night, too, ended very late. But I still got a good night’s sleep for tomorrow’s drive home.

It was announced that next year’s convention will be in Oklahoma. There are several excellent cat facilities there. It will also give me a chance to visit Kurt Beckelman’s place, “Safari’s Interactive Wildlife Sanctuary.” Doc Antle has hinted he might do some handling training, if the convention can be timed right. Hard as it is to believe that this convention can be topped, I think next year’s might do it. I am already looking forward to convention 2010! •



Banquet

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Size	Less than 500	500	1000	2500	5000+	Length(inches)	Weight(grams)	Count
X-Small Pinkies:	\$0.16	\$0.15	\$0.14	\$0.13	\$0.12	0.50 - 1.00	1.30 - 1.80	100
Small Pinkies:	\$0.16	\$0.15	\$0.14	\$0.13	\$0.12	0.50 - 1.00	1.90 - 2.40	100
Large Pinkies:	\$0.16	\$0.15	\$0.14	\$0.13	\$0.12	0.50 - 1.00	2.50 - 3.00	100
Peach Fuzzies:	\$0.19	\$0.18	\$0.17	\$0.16	\$0.15	1.00 - 1.25	3.10 - 4.40	100
Fuzzies:	\$0.19	\$0.18	\$0.17	\$0.16	\$0.15	1.25 - 1.50	4.50 - 7.00	100
Hoppers:	\$0.30	\$0.28	\$0.26	\$0.24	\$0.22	1.50 - 2.00	8.00 - 12.00	100
Weanlings:	\$0.40	\$0.38	\$0.36	\$0.34	\$0.32	2.00 - 2.50	13.00 - 19.00	50
Large Adults:	\$0.45	\$0.43	\$0.41	\$0.39	\$0.37	2.50 - 3.00	20.00 - 29.00	50
X-Large Adults:	\$0.55	\$0.53	\$0.51	\$0.49	\$0.47	3.00 - 3.75	30.00 - 50.00	25

* We offer combined quantity discount mouse pricing. * Measurement does not include tail length.

Rats



Size	Less than 500	500	1000+	Length (inches)	Weight (grams)	Count
Pinkies:	\$0.39	\$0.34	\$0.29	1.50 - 2.00	3.00 - 8.00	100
Fuzzies:	\$0.49	\$0.44	\$0.39	2.00 - 2.50	9.00 - 19.00	100
Pups:	\$0.79	\$0.74	\$0.69	2.50 - 3.50	20.00 - 29.00	25
Weaned:	\$0.89	\$0.84	\$0.79	3.50 - 4.50	30.00 - 44.00	25
Small:	\$0.99	\$0.94	\$0.89	4.50 - 6.00	45.00 - 84.00	20
Medium:	\$1.39	\$1.34	\$1.29	6.00 - 8.00	85.00 - 174.00	10
Large:	\$1.49	\$1.44	\$1.39	8.00 - 9.00	175.00 - 274.00	5
X-Large:	\$1.59	\$1.54	\$1.49	9.00 - 11.00	275.00 - 374.00	3
XX-Large:	\$1.79	\$1.74	\$1.69	11.00 - 13.00	375.00 - 474.00	2
XXX-Large:	\$1.99	\$1.94	\$1.89	11.00 - 13.00	475.00 - 600.00+	2

* We offer combined quantity discount rat pricing. * Measurement does not include tail length.

Coturnix Quail



Size	Less than 500	500	1000+	Grams	Oz.	Count
1 Day:	\$0.34	\$0.29	\$0.24	7.50 - 10.00	.25	100
1 Week:	\$0.64	\$0.59	\$0.54	30.00 - 40.00	1.0	25
2 Week:	\$0.84	\$0.79	\$0.74	50.00 - 75.00	2.5	10
3 Week:	\$1.04	\$0.99	\$0.94	100.00 - 125.00	4.0	10
6 Week:	\$1.34	\$1.24	\$1.14	130.00 - 150.00	5.0	5
8 Week:	\$1.44	\$1.34	\$1.24	155.00 - 185.00	6.5	5
10 Week:	\$1.64	\$1.54	\$1.44	190.00 - 225.00	8.0	5

* We offer combined quantity discount quail pricing.

Rabbits



Size	Our Price	Weight (lbs.)	Count
X-Small:	\$3.50	0.50 - 0.75	1
Small:	\$4.50	1.00 - 1.75	1
Medium:	\$5.50	2.00 - 3.75	1
Large:	\$6.50	4.00 - 5.75	1
X-Large:	\$7.00	6.00 - 7.75	1
XX-Large:	\$8.00	8.00 - 9.75	1
XXX-Large:	\$9.00	10.00 - 11.75+	1

Chicks

Size	Less than 500	500	1000	5000	10000+	Grams	Ounces	Count
Small:	\$0.25	\$0.20	\$0.15	\$0.12	\$0.10	30.00 - 35.00	1.0	25



Guinea Pigs

Size	Less Than 500	500	1000+	Inches	Grams	Count
Medium:	\$1.39	\$1.34	\$1.29	6.00 - 8.00	85.00 - 174.00	10
Large:	\$1.49	\$1.44	\$1.39	8.00 - 9.00	175.00 - 274.00	5
X-Large:	\$1.59	\$1.54	\$1.49	9.00 - 11.00	275.00 - 374.00	3
XX-Large:	\$1.79	\$1.74	\$1.69	11.00 - 13.00	375.00 - 474.00	2
XXX-Large:	\$1.99	\$1.94	\$1.89	11.00 - 13.00	475.00 - 600.00	2
XXXX-Large:	\$2.29	\$2.24	\$2.19	13.00 - 15.00	601.00 - 900.00+	1

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FCF General Membership Meeting Highlights

By Lynn Culver

Thursday afternoon approximately 75 members arrived to register, drop off auction items, socialize, and visit with the various kittens, cubs, and feline ambassadors. A young spotted Geoffroy's kitten brought by Jill Galindo and a pair of melanistic sisters that Lynn Culver brought were the tiniest in attendance, but made up for their diminutive size with their outgoing, confident, easy-going personalities. Mike Friese's Savannah hybrid, Dakar, was on hand as well. Convention host Charlie Sammut's trainers brought his newly-acquired cougar cub, as well as a yearling Siberian lynx, and a 16-year-old serval for us to enjoy.

During the icebreaker, there was plenty of delicious food and beverage offerings, thanks to our vice president, Patty Perry, dubbed the "Costco Queen" assisted by her able shopping assistants Doc Antle and Robert Johnson. Their afternoon buying spree netting us a lavish buffet of vegetable trays, fruit mixes, croissants with choices of meat and cheeses, sushi, jumbo shrimp, chips, and an assortment of crackers, dips, and chips. To finish off the meal, cookies, brownies, muffins, and baklava were in abundance. Liquid refreshments included soft drinks, red and white wines, margari-

tas, and beer.

The annual membership meeting followed with a rousing speech by Tim Stoffel that brought the room to applause. He reminded FCF that conservation of cats is all well and good, but if this organization and its members do not get more involved in state and federal legislation and work to make political alliances and inform citizens and representatives of the animal rights not so hidden agenda, we will cease to exist.

Members were presented three choices for next year's convention—Oklahoma, St. Louis, and Chicago. By a show of hands, Oklahoma was the winner.

The most significant topic of conversation at this meeting commenced after viewing an advance copy of *The Tiger Next Door* on the large screen TV. The documentary was produced by a Canadian film crew and is scheduled to debut this fall. Trailers for it exist on the internet and it is not a pretty sight. It will have negative repercussions for the feline community.

The Tiger Next Door is the story of Dennis Hill, a former USDA and USDI licensed tiger breeder in Indiana. While it is only now being released, it is largely a story of the past, with most of the events transpiring about three years ago. However, it gives the mistaken impression that it reflects the

current state of affairs in the world of tigers and private ownership.

After a long history of repeated non-compliance with animal welfare regulations, Mr. Hill lost his federal licenses. Once that happened, he fell under the jurisdiction of the State of Indiana for regulation. Indiana DNR officers inspected him shortly after the torrential rains caused by hurricane Katrina and they found his tigers pacing belly-deep in mud. Mr. Hill was given 30 days to find homes for 30 animals, mostly tigers, a few bears, and a cougar. If that was accomplished, DNR would grant him permission to keep three tigers on his property.

That is basically where this story begins, and the film crew documents Mr. Hill's night and day efforts to comply with the DNR order so that he would not be found in contempt of court and risk losing all his tigers.

Viewers watch as he goes through the endless process of calling, screening, begging, and then badgering those who have agreed to take his animals. It was especially amazing to me as I am well aware that this took place during a time period when the sanctuary world was screaming they could not absorb any more cats. Incredibly, on the day before the deadline, all the adult tigers





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are successfully shifted to transport cages without any tranquilizing and then transported to a sanctuary. I will say that I was impressed at this man's understanding of his animals and his ability to manage their actions and get them loaded without needing any tranquilizers.

Next, the DNR holds a public hearing of neighbors and concerned citizens. This is what I found interesting. The room seemed evenly divided, with half the people supporting Mr. Hill's right to have tigers. And the complaining neighbor that wanted his license pulled was shown to be untruthful in his accusations. In the end, the DNR reaffirmed their decision to allow Mr. Hill to possess three tigers.

I imagine Mr. Hill sees himself as the downtrodden hero and that is why he agreed to allow this documentary. I imagine he wanted the world to know the sacrifices animal people make for their charges. He wanted to wake America up to the hardships we endure, and prejudices we all face when we chose our unconventional lifestyle in a society of increasing conformity. He is a ZZ Top look-alike, and describes himself in this documentary as an old hippie. As I watched his life story unfold, I was reminded of the lyrics to a Charlie Daniels' song, one that has been dedicated to my husband, another "old hippie nature lover," many a time by rock and roll bands.

*"I ain't asking nobody for nothing,
if I can't get it on my own,
and if you don't like the way I'm livin',
you just leave this long-haired country boy
alone."*

We do not live in a bubble, and everything each of us does will affect everyone in the community, in our case, the feline community. Mr. Hill broke the rules of good husbandry and several scenes depicting his animal practices bothered me. I was especially affected by the standoff between the two "tiger whisperers," Dennis Hill and Joe Taft, founder of the Exotic Feline Rescue Center, a facility where several of Dennis' tigers now reside. As Mr. Hill is filmed touring the sanctuary that housed his former charges, the discussion turns ugly and Joe tears into him for his failure to provide timely veterinary care, and he recounts the many root canals and tooth extractions he provided to tigers long-neglected by Den-

nis. Joe happens to be a personal friend of mine, and I can still remember when Joe first told me about taking in those tigers and having them treated at the University of Illinois Veterinary School.

The documentary then backtracks to Mr. Hill's more prosperous times in the early 1990s, back before his heavy equipment business was ruined by international competition. His dream of financial rebound by breeding snow-white tiger cubs never materializes. As a result, Mr. Hill suffered and his tigers suffered. The lesson we all need to learn is that society does not forgive you if you live as poorly as your cats. You will just be perceived as an animal

hoarder, keeping more animals than you can afford to properly care for.

Charlie Sammut led the group in a thought-provoking discussion of the ramifications this documentary will have on our community. He related his experiences and gave advice from his career in film and television work. Charlie stressed to us all that if we can learn anything from this documentary, it is to serve as warning to anyone contemplating allowing a film crew to shoot footage. Your property must be in tip-top shape. Your records need to be up-to-date. And never, ever, allow any filming without an explicit clause that gives you final say before the material is published. •

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FCF Educator's Course Review

By Leslie Thalman

A great opportunity to hone my interpretive skills, this FCF class seemed to be a perfect fit to supplement my knowledge about wildcat conservation and how to share it with the public.

Ron DeArmond proved to be a warm and energetic educator for the subject.

The class was framed around the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Introduction to Wildlife Education Programming. Ron did a great job leading us through this guide to discover new tools to develop or enrich our presentations. This guide was supplemented with a feline-specific guide specifically developed for the course by Ron.

The class included animal lovers, trainers, owners, professional educators, and newcomers to the field. Several of the participants had exotic cats at home and they were laying the groundwork to start a wildlife education outreach program in their own community. Some participants are already involved in community education and wanted to improve their presentations.

Ron covered subjects including organizing presentations, learning styles, age appropriate presentations, and educational aids. Throughout the class, Ron generously

shared his own grains of wisdom and experiences. Of course, quality care for the animal ambassadors was always emphasized.

The important aspects of regulations, permits, dealing with agency representatives, and insurance were discussed. Safety was a continuing theme throughout the class.

The course seemed thorough and well-balanced with plenty of time for Q&A throughout the day. I feel this is a valuable resource and hope it is offered regularly. •

Leslie Thalman has been interpreting African wildlife at Safari West Wildlife Preserve for 15 years. She is the lead guide and is responsible for training Safari West's guide staff to lead tours over the 400-acre property. Safari West educates guests about animals from fennec fox to rhinos, weaver birds to saddle billed storks. They have a very short three hours to describe close to 40 mammal species and over 50 bird species. Leslie enjoys the privilege of being one of the caretakers of Safari West's four cheetahs.

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Convention Afterglow: Three-Day Animal Trainer's Course

By Joe Fortunato

There were four FCF members, including myself, who enrolled in Charlie's Animal Trainers' Course. During our extended training at the ranch, we had the opportunity to work with a variety of animals. Each day began with us working with Charlie's magnificent elephants. The pachyderms spend their days on a five-acre sanctuary on the ranch with four safari style bed and breakfast suites overlooking the sanctuary. Their nights are spent in their enclosed buildings for safety reasons.

We suited up wearing rubber boots and proceeded to the daily task of washing the elephants. Once they were washed, we learned about husbandry techniques which included medicating and grooming. Malika, the smallest elephant, has allergies and needs special attention. We learned how to take blood samples and bank the samples for future research in addition to administering her medication, which costs \$3,000 monthly. Because of her allergies, she was fed a special diet. Malika was the first elephant we were exposed to due to her gentle nature. Once she was bathed and medicated, we had the opportunity to interact with her and learn basic commands. The language is quite simple and short when working with these humongous creatures.

Once Charlie felt we (us and the elephants) established a comfort level, we began our basic training which eventually led to us having Malika respond to verbal commands such as "move up" to walk forward, "back" to back up, "come in" to move closer, "steady" to stop, and many other commands. It may sound easy on paper but let me tell you it was not. Ele-




Four graduates from Charlie Sammut's intensive animal training course strike a pose with Butch, one of the four African elephants that reside at E.A.R.S. The graduates are: (L-R) Maxine Sauer, Steven Pierce, Angela Anderson, Joe Fortunato.

phants are very intelligent animals that can easily decide to do their own thing if the

trainer does not demonstrate self-confidence.

After working with Malika, we had the opportunity to work with some of Charlie's larger elephants which were much more challenging. Paula and Christy enjoyed testing us and were certainly more interested in browsing and grazing then following our commands. This is when we really began to learn how to train the elephants, though they actually were training us! Being able to interact with Charlie's elephants was a special experience and even more so to have them respond to our verbal requests.

After the elephants had their daily bath, they were moved to their five-acre play-



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pen where they were greeted by ostriches, water buffalo, and a stubborn zebra. One elephant would then accompany Charlie and his staff for the morning breakfast delivery to the four safari style bed and breakfast bungalows on the ranch. To see the excitement on the faces of the guests was absolutely priceless. Not only did they get to see the elephants up close and photograph them, but they were also able to hand feed them from the safety of their enclosed front porch.

After the morning meet and greet with the guests, we moved on to other daily activities. On Monday we moved onto grooming a horse and Bactrian camel. Once that was done we interacted with hoofstock such as a Grants zebra, miniature donkey and a Z-Donk. We then got to meet a raccoon, capuchin monkey, baby cougar, and baboon.

The afternoon consisted of us working with Lucas, a 170-pound male lion. Charlie demonstrated Lucas' training capabilities and then I had the prestigious opportunity to train him. This was the most amazing opportunity to be able to work with a large cat.

On Tuesday, after bathing the elephants, we spent some time working hoofstock. If anyone told me I would be breaking in reindeer for Santa, I would have laughed at them. Once the reindeer were accustomed to us, we groomed them. While doing so, we were able to feel their velvety antlers which will later shed and develop into a strong solid antler, so watch out!

We also hung out with a summer camp group and watched as their faces lit up when it was their turn to help wash the elephant. Afterward they had an opportunity to have their photos taken with the sparkling clean elephant. Later in the day we worked with Christy and Paula. By the end of the day, we were having a blast walking together doing figure eights and 360 degree turns. What an amazing experience with two incredible pachyderms!

On the last day of our experience, we crossed paths with a private party of two who reserved a private tour. Half way through their visit, we had lunch with them. When Charlie asked about their day so far the woman responded, "This is the best day of my life." At that point I thought to myself that those were the best words any zookeeper or animal facilitator would want

to hear. I felt very proud for Charlie and I am sure he felt the same way. He certainly deserved that compliment.

Charlie is truly a professional who cares and loves his animals deeply. We both share a passion for wildlife. I must admit that Charlie and I connected early in the game. Most likely because we had two things in common: our true love and devotion to animals and the fact we both served as police officers before becoming full-time animal educators.

Charlie's animal trainer course is more likely to change your mind about *not* keeping wild felines, especially the greater cats. These animals are not to be kept as pets or status symbol trophies. They are beautiful, but dangerous animals, which may be kept by experienced keepers *only*.

This was by far the best three days in my life that I have ever spent working with large exotic animals. I plan to attend the advanced animal trainer's course some time in the future with hopes of having my staff

attend his courses also. There was never a time when I felt my safety, or the safety of others, was minutely jeopardized. I always felt completely safe and quickly learned that Charlie has a very close and personal trusting relationship with his animals that became very apparent early in the program. The amount of knowledge he has to offer is amazing and he has earned the respect of his staff and animals through his many years of caring for his animals. Great job, Charlie!

Charlie has plans to make modifications to his ranch to turn it into a non-profit zoo open to the public on a daily basis. This is a major task that will entail assistance from the public. Please consider helping Charlie reach his goal by giving a donation of money, time, or supplies.

Wild Things/Vision Quest Ranch is located at 400 River Road, Salinas, CA 93908. Charlie and Heather Sammut can be reached at 800-228-7382 or <http://www.wildthingsinc.com>.



Joe Fortunato and adolescent African lion, Luke, receive training instructions from Charlie Sammut.



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Joe Fortunato

Animal Training: Science + Experience = Recipe for Success

By Charlie Sammut

Hosting the FCF convention at my facility was a first in my career. Having a large captive group of fellow animal trainers and enthusiasts to share my experiences and philosophies was both exciting and nerve racking. I always say at the beginning of all my animal training classes and in this case, training articles, “the following is merely my opinion based on the results of my experiences and/or those of others I have watched along the way.” It has been said that, “the only thing two animal trainers can agree on is what the third animal trainer is doing wrong...”

I have grown to believe there is no “one way” to accomplish anything when training animals. The funny thing is, although the

final goal is the same, the ingredients to achieve that goal are usually different dependent on several key factors. The most important key factor is the individual animal—its age, personality and most importantly, its natural species-specific instincts. If you have trained capuchin monkeys for a living and been very successful at it, applying what you know to chimpanzees will most likely get you killed. In other words, being experienced with capuchin monkeys doesn’t make you experienced with primates in general. By the same token, if you have trained tigers all your life and been very successful at it, that does not mean you’re necessarily qualified to train lions or leopards and so on. You have to at least be willing and able to understand that there are

instinctual differences between the different cats based upon their social structures and environments in the wild. That can be learned from a book. That to me is where science ends and experience takes over. It is up to the trainer to get that experience and in my opinion, hands-on is still the best.

The other key factor is the trainer’s personality, experience, and natural abilities. I have come to the conclusion that not everyone is cut out for animal training, especially with big cats. It takes a certain personality to respond to the actions of a big cat in a fashion that will see a favorable response from the cat. Those who tend to be extremely passive, timid, and less confident are far more likely to activate a big cat’s instinct to challenge that person more than



Mike Friese

it might when responding to a person with a more aggressive and confident personality. But by the same token, I have found that those trainers with more aggressive personalities are often useless around most canids and smaller primates that are frightened by big strong personalities. I cannot even be on-set when my fellow trainers are working their wolves or foxes. They have always seemed to be terrified of me.

Being one or the other does not make you any less of a trainer; knowing what best suits your personality is what can make you the best trainer you can be. Yes, there are those who are too much of either personality type to ever be a safe, effective animal trainer, but those folks usually do not last long in today's animal industries anyway. It is also important for a trainer to know and admit their limitations. I train and work with big cats, bears, elephants, venomous reptiles, but chimps terrify me! That is where I draw my line and I stand behind it. I have had several students take my course, only to realize that an adult male lion coming towards them for a piece of meat is beyond their scope of reason. I applaud those people for recognizing and

admitting that fear and more so, for not masking or trying to hide it.

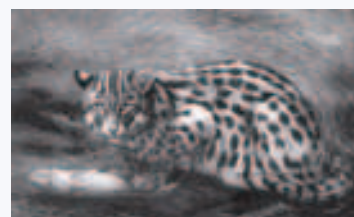
More and more, I have heard and watched too many inexperienced animal people try to analyze and scientifically rationalize everything animals do. If an animal attacks someone, they are always looking for "the reason" whether it be the color of someone's hair or clothes or something else in the environment. They suggest that the animal would not have done what it did if that ingredient wasn't present.

I blame this rationale an application of *Too much science*, a science that I feel doesn't necessarily exist. They dismiss the possibility of that particular animal just not being cut out for that activity simply based on its own personality. Like people, not every animal is social or ever cares to be. I participate in several Animal Planet and Discovery Channel shows where I provide a professional opinion on an animal's behavior. (Note: I insist they use the word "professional,"—not "expert"—a word I feel is extremely abused and undefined in the animal industries!)

The producers are always a bit frustrated with me because I am not always able to

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deliver the “scientific reason” they hope to capture in the program. When I look at most incidents concerning an animal’s behavior (or misbehavior), I find an animal simply allowing its own natural instinct or personality to temporarily shine through; this is usually beyond its control. I have come to realize that when we ask a lion or tiger to assume a friendly relationship with us in captivity, we are asking that animal to set its natural instincts aside. More and more, I see television programming that depicts people interacting with wild animals in a fashion that asks the animals to set way too much of those instincts aside. It saddens me for eventually, the animal slips and becomes for a moment what it is meant to be and it usually costs the animal its life. (The “Grizzly Man” was a prime example of this.) But more important, I fear that the audience watching will think these people have some magical gift or possess some “scientific knowledge” that affords that person the ability to interact with these animals in this fashion without being harmed. I for one don’t buy into it and I do my best to share another thought process for all to consider.

Experience dictates our ability to determine how much of that instinct we can ask an individual animal to fairly surrender and for how long. It will be different for every individual animal. That ability also enables us to recognize when we are training too far or too fast. I use many analogies when teaching others what I have learned. One is to that of the hard drive on a computer. An animal’s brain (as does a human’s) only has so much storage capacity. Some have more than others (again, as with humans). The trainer’s ability to recognize when that capacity is reaching its limit will determine the longevity of their animal’s ability to interact with them or anyone else safely. Their hard drives can and will crash if they are overloaded so I’ve always been a proponent of training as slowly and positively as possible. The more fun they have while learning, the more learning they will want to do.

There is nothing more exciting to a trainer than realizing one day that their animal has “learned to learn.” That is when a window opens that enables us to shape and mold our special relationship with that animal. But once again, it is important not to overload that hard drive to a point that the



Charlie sits beside Chui, one of the very few great working spotted leopards in the industry. Chui's credits include still photos in National Geographic, Ranger Rick and Wildlife Conservation magazines, and Hollywood motion pictures such as Jungle Boy and Mighty Joe Young.

Tom Harvey

window not only slams shut, it shatters the relationship with the animal. Most training is accomplished in the earliest years of an animal’s life by simply acclimating it to as many strange environments as possible. I have always preached that raising them is 50% of their training. Let them have childhoods. Teach them respect and discipline along the way but the more intricate training can happen later if they have a good foundation. They can and should learn what a food reward is early without their being hungry to do so.

One of my favorite trainers once told me that timing is everything. I have found that to be very true in my career. Knowing when to start their formal training. Knowing when to stop. Knowing when to continue. Knowing when to add to a training protocol. Knowing when to reward. Knowing when to discipline. Knowing when you’re about to get eaten. “When” is one of the most important ingredients. My cats (as do most in the entertainment industry) accomplish their behavior for food rewards but a cat that is too hungry is working too hard to

surrender its instinct rather than concentrating on the behavior being asked of it. Again, experience will teach you to recognize how and when to monitor and adjust for the individual cat. “How” to train a behavior is also important but not as important as knowing where to go to find out how. Even after 20+ years, I would not hesitate to call those who have been doing it for 30+ years to ask for a recipe or advice on a response I am seeing from one of my animals. As the old saying goes, “when you’ve learned all there is to know in our business, you are either in great danger or dead!”

Training is a recipe. You apply the ingredients step by step, one step leading to the next. When the ingredients are known and applied in the correct order, the end result has a much better chance of success. Yes, there will be exceptions to the rule with some animals for individual personality reasons, but the ability to be creative and sometimes divide a step into two or three smaller steps defines your experience. In some cases, experience will afford us the ability to skip or combine steps for those animals with larger, more patient, and faster hard drives. Experience will also enable you to know when an individual animal is simply not trainable based on its individual personality.

I believe that animal training is evolving based on both positive and negative influences. Obviously the most negative influence comes from the extremist activist groups who unfortunately have a very strong financial lobby to adversely effect what they know so little about. The positive influence must come from the trainers who realize that these animals are not as available or replaceable as they might have been in the past, therefore proper training and longevity is far more important than it might have been. Obviously, this evolution benefits the health and well-being of the animals as it does our industries.

Training animals for entertainment is by far (in my opinion of course) the most stressful aspect of training for we put pressure on both the animal to perform on schedule as well as on ourselves for guaranteeing they will. To turn a full grown tiger or lion completely loose in a city or countryside in close proximity to cast and crew and guarantee its control is a stress no



Melissa Faust

Charlie runs Jacob, an adult lion, through his daily training routine. Note the use of restraint lead and bite stick for safety equipment.

matter how much confidence you have in your abilities or the cat. But knowing the ingredients that went into that cats training is what enables us to accomplish this work. Teaching the cat along the way that it can work for food without being aggressive, and that its return to its trainer will result in a reward, is what we feel is responsible for an almost flawless record in the entertainment industry today.

Lastly, I feel the salvation of animal training rests upon the trainers themselves. The success of the extremist activists stems from their unity! Animal trainers/enthusiasts must admit and realize this and in doing so, follow suit. They must draw their own lines before others do it for them and in doing so, define their own evolution. And in drawing those lines, it is important to qualify people to do certain things with these animals. For behind every tragic incident, there typically lies a mistake and in most cases, it is a matter of someone participating in an activity they simply were not qualified to participate in. It is important that everyone charged with caring for these animals recognize the limits of their experience and their need to take certain risks for the mistakes effect everyone—

commercial and non-commercial alike. My participation with FCF stems from the right people convincing me that non-commercial ownership can and should be protected provided we clearly define and qualify owners for certain activities with their animals. If we can accomplish this, we can move the evolution of our industries and hobby in a positive direction.

Today, when I am training an animal, it's not about how many behaviors I can train it to do, it's about the relationship I hope to secure for the life of that animal! If I can simply keep the animal safe enough to come out of its enclosure to interact comfortably with me and my staff, I have reached my initial goal. If I can further the training to achieve more intricate behaviors, well that's just icing on the cake. What the script calls for or what the producers and directors want is not and has never been more important than protecting my relationship with some of my best friends, my animals. I can only hope to influence more trainers to feel the same way and hopefully, influence the evolution of animal training in a positive direction for the animals and our industries. •

Odds Are Too Good To Pass Up—Win a Safari in Africa!

The African Safari Sweepstakes is a fundraiser for the FCF. Here is the way it works: We offer each person who donates \$10 to the FCF a chance for an estimated \$7,000 safari vacation for two. The international airfare is covered 100% by FCF. The winner will have to provide his or her own transportation to the international flight departure point.

If 700 people donate \$10 each, FCF profits around \$1,500. That is only one donation per member. In that case each sweepstakes ticket holder has a one chance in 700 to be the person who wins a one-week stay at a luxury safari lodge for themselves and another, and international airfare to get there.

If the FCF members find 1,000 people to donate \$10 to our organization, then the chance of winning for each donation is one in 1000. And in that case, the FCF generates about \$3,000. That's only 1.5 donations per member.

If 1,500 people donate, or two donations per member, the FCF generates about \$8,000 to put toward operating this corporation, paying staff, furthering our messages to legislators and the media, and improving and expanding our educational programs.

Our goal is for each FCF member to solicit 10 donations. If we reach this goal, we'll have around \$70,000 to work with!

Whether the chance is one in 700, or 1 in 7,000, all of those numbers are mighty good odds for a \$10 investment. But right now, the odds that a donor will win this trip are more like 1 in 150, and so we really need each member (and that includes you)



to get busy helping promote this fundraiser.

We thought the summer would be a great time to sell tickets with fairs, picnics, heavy traffic through our member's animal exhibits, but so far—unless our members are just holding onto the ticket stubs and checks and plan to surprise us this fall—things are not progressing as well as envisioned.

So let me be frank here. We need each FCF member to find four people who have always wanted to fly to Africa and experience close encounters with rhinos, elephants, lions, zebra, giraffes, and all the exotic bird life, to donate \$10 for the opportunity to win this trip. It really should not be that hard. You have until January 1, 2010.

Not only does this grand prize cover the one week at your choice of three different Zulu Nyala safari lodges, but also includes international air travel from New York or Washington D.C., to South Africa on South African airlines. And to top it off, you can bring a guest of your choice at no extra charge.

Do not forget for every ten, \$10 donations generated by you, one sweepstakes entry form will be filled out in your name. These entry forms have a "referred by" line on them. To get proper credit, be sure to have your name filled in the forms and we will keep a running total and make out

entry forms to correspond.

This fundraiser is over January 1, 2010. Don't miss out. The odds are more than fair, the organization is very worthy of support, and the prize is a chance of a lifetime. You deserve it, and FCF needs it.

The FCF member who refers the most donations will win registration and three night's stay at the 2010 FCF convention hotel.

You will notice we have included another page of four Safari Sweepstakes entry forms inside this journal. That is because we need you to find donors wanting a chance to see Africa. To help promote this safari prize, this poster file has been uploaded to the Members-Only section of the FCF web site under the African Safari heading. Download it and print it to advertise this sweepstakes at your office, gift shop, and outreach events.

Donors may take entry forms and mail them directly or you may assist and collect these FCF donations. Be sure to cut each entry form in half, and give the donor their receipt side and mail the entry form and all donations to the FCF executive director, Lynn Culver, 141 Polk 664, Mena, AR 71953.

FCF needs your help, and this is a "purrfect" opportunity for you to help raise funds. •



Classifications of the Felidae

What soothsayers, vampires, and the Gang of Seven small cats of South America tell us

Dr. Jim Sanderson

Taxonomy, from the Greek word *tasso* meaning arrange, is the scientific classification of organisms. Many classification systems have been introduced, but in 1735 Carl von Linné, a Swedish naturalist, published *Systema Naturae*, a systematic classification of animals, plants, and minerals. We now know him as Linnaeus. As Linnaeus' list of what he had classified grew, up-to-date editions of *Systema Naturae* were published. In 1749, Linnaeus introduced a binomial classification system that used Latin binomials to name and classify species, grouping them by genera, genera into classes, and classes into orders. The tenth edition, published in 1758, marks the starting-point of modern zoological nomenclature. Despite challenges, the Linnean system remains in use today.

Phylogenetic systematics is the study of biological organisms and their groupings for the purpose of classification based on their evolutionary descent (Allaby 1999). Phylogeny is the evolutionary relationship of species within and between taxonomic levels. A classification system based on phylogeny groups species according to their evolutionary history. The problem of creating a Felidae taxonomy, or phylogeny, is to determine how each species of wildcat is related to every other species of wildcat and to place together those most closely related. Prior to about 25 years ago, there was just one way to classify species. Naturally, the two approaches produce different results.

Traditional taxonomy is based upon comparing physical, or morphological, characters of an organism. Organisms with similar morphological (from the Greek word *morphe*-, a prefix meaning form) characters are presumed to be derived from a common ancestor and so are believed to be most closely related. That is, organisms with similar morphologies must have diverged from a common ancestor, and so on through the family tree.

Modern molecular classification is also based on comparing organisms. The phylogeny of species is determined by comparing autosomal, X-linked, Y-linked, and



Anne-Sophie Bertrand and Alcides Renaldi

A gang of four (from top): ocelot, Geoffroy's cat, margay, and tigrina

mitochondrial gene segments. Differences in same sequences of genes taken from different species are compared to place organisms in the classification system. Since genes accumulate changes over time, those species that have the most similar gene sequences are presumed to be most closely related. Such changes are then passed on to descendants. Widely separated populations accumulate different random changes. Since number of differences increases steadily with time, the number of differ-

ences acts as a molecular clock from which separation dates from a common ancestor can be inferred.

Thus, traditional taxonomy and molecular taxonomy both classify organisms according to similarities and differences. Traditional taxonomy uses the phenotype (the observable features), or morphology, produced by a genotype and the environment, to classify organisms. Without consideration of the phenotype and environmental influence, molecular taxonomy uses

the genotype to classify organisms. Like soothsayers and fortune-tellers of medieval Europe, traditional taxonomists cast the bones across the table and interpret them. Molecular taxonomists, like vampires, require only blood to sustain them.

Because the phenotype is the observable manifestation of the genotype, it is easy to imagine that, no matter which classification methodology is used, a similar classification of the wildcats should result. At a coarse scale this is true, however, the devil—as is often repeated—is in the details, in this case at the level of species. From these two closely related methodologies, two slightly different family trees emerge for the Felidae, the Great Family of Cats. In most cases, the two methodologies produce similar results. For instance, both agree that there are eight distinct lineages of extant wildcats. However, differences are the very food of academic debate, and minor differences makes careers. Understanding the differences might make reconciliation possible however, science is not about reconciliation; it is about the search for truth.

Phenotypic variability in the Felidae

More than 125 years ago, Daniel Giraud Elliot (1883) published *A Monograph of the Felidae*. He attempted to reconcile the great number of species naturalists attributed to the family of cats. Because spot patterns were used to classify species, many more species were thought to exist. Naturalists sometimes listed more than 50 species, in spite of the fact that not all species were known. Elliot realized that spot pattern alone was insufficient to produce a classification of the Felidae. Elliot wrote:

Forty-two species, including the domestic cat, have been recognized in this work as distinct and I have seen nothing that has been advanced by any writer to cause me to alter any of the opinions expressed, or believe that more of the forms should be accorded specific rank. There may be some specimens regarding whose exact position our present knowledge does not permit us to determine definitely; but of these, many examples from different localities, if the habitat is an extensive one, must be procured before it can be decided whether the variations exhibited are or are not such as pertain solely to individuals, or if they do

*not graduate through a series of examples to the style exhibited by the types of the species. The skulls, as I have shown (and this fact is patent to every mammalogist), vary even among examples of the same species to a great degree; and slight differences in crania, therefore, cannot safely be accepted as indicating distinct forms, any more than a variation in the colour or shape of the spots, or in the arrangement of the markings taken by themselves can, properly, be considered sufficient to constitute a species. Thickness or length of the fur is another unreliable character, as is proved by tigers and leopards from cold and warm countries being so differently clothed, and yet belonging to the same species respectively; and is to be expected that other species of the family from different latitudes will vary from each other in a similar degree. Length of tail is another character only to be accepted with the greatest caution; for it is known that the caudal vertebrae are not equal in number among individuals of even the same species. Variations in all the points mentioned above are to be expected among the cats, and sometimes they occur to an extraordinary degree, witness the examples of *F. pardalis*, Linn., called *F. melanura*; and therefore such forms are to be regarded as varieties, and not hastily announced as newly discovered species. The confusion*

that existed in the synonymy of many species was occasioned solely, as I believe, by different authors not [being] aware of the great amount of variation that exists among the members of this family; and, indeed, it is only comparatively lately that this fact has been understood. The size of the spots is an unreliable character; for I have almost always found, among the species of small-spotted cats, that there would be individuals having large spots, sometimes inclined to take the form of rings with light centres; but with the addition of other specimens, these would prove to be only individual variations. Among the cats a peculiarity of coloration and markings and of general form is only of specific value when it is corroborated by the skull also showing conspicuous differences from those of other known species; and when these characters are sustained by several individuals, then it can be decided with some approach to certainty that a new species has been discovered. But to accept any of these characters by itself as sufficient is more likely to lead to error than to increase our knowledge of the family. A systematic arrangement of the species of Felidae cannot be made; but I have endeavored to group together those that presented a similar style of coloration and a general mode of life, as well as a resemblance in the formation of their skulls.

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Despite his best effort, Elliot listed the pampas cat as two distinct species: *Felis pajeros* and *Felis colocolo*, the jaguarundi as two distinct species: *Felis jaguarundi* and *Felis eyra*, the leopard cat as three distinct species: *Felis bengalensis*, *Felis javensis*, and *Felis euphilura*, and the Asian wildcat as three distinct species: *Felis ornata*, *Felis shawiana*, and *Felis caudata*. Nevertheless, Elliot provided a credible taxonomy for his day. Frustration continued to be the name of the game for subsequent naturalists that sought to create a classification of the world's cats.

The Gang of Seven small cats in South America

In 2000, Kevin Seymour (2001) of the Royal Ontario Museum, decided to investigate the taxonomic relationships of South America's seven small cats: Andean cat, Geoffroy's cat, guña (kodkod), margay, ocelot, pampas cat, and tigrina (oncilla, small spotted cat). Note that the jaguarundi was not included because it is not closely related to the Gang of Seven. The cover of the magazine of the Royal Ontario Museum Rotunda says it all:

Wildcats' Next of Kin: How seven little-known species of South American felines are confounding scientists

Classical taxonomists use two key areas of examination for comparison: patterns on the animal's pelt and the animal's tooth and skull structure. For this reason, historical mammal collections consist only of skins and bones, but these days, tissue samples for DNA analysis are also regularly saved.

Seymour decided to restrict his analysis to skulls because skulls are "complex structures laden with features compared to a limb bone, for instance, which is relatively simple in structure." Variability in the spot patterns confounded naturalists for at least a century and wisely was not considered. Note that in 1883 Elliot rejected coat pattern as a classification tool.

To gain a large enough sample, Seymour visited 21 museums in the U.S. and Europe and in each examined and measured 40 specific features of 1762 skulls belonging to South American small felids. Seymour later wrote:

The problem with my seven cat species was that the more specimens I studied, the deeper I sank into a morass of variability. Every character was variable, although

some were less variable.

In the end, Seymour was left with 16 good characters to use for identifying each species. For determining relationships among the species, six of 16 characters were unique to one or another species, and were therefore not useful for grouping. The remaining ten characters and an additional seven not found useful in identification were found to be useful for grouping. Seymour also used five other characters such as skin characteristics and chromosome number. Thus, he decided to use 22 characters including one, chromosome number, not traditionally used by morphological taxonomists. Seymour chose as his outgroups, or outliers, the domestic cat and the jaguarundi.

Once all the characters were measured, Seymour ran a computer program that grouped similar features. Seymour's computer analysis showed seven basic groupings: domestic cat, ocelot–margay, Geoffroy's cat–tigrina, jaguarundi, guña, and pampas cat–Andean cat. Seymour's analysis showed the Gang of Seven was similar but this was already well known because each member of the Gang of Seven has 18 pairs of chromosomes while all other members of the Felidae, including the domestic cat and jaguarundi, have 19 pairs of chromosomes.

Seymour's molecular analysis produced

a slightly different grouping: domestic cat, jaguarundi, Andean cat–ocelot–margay, pampas cat, tigrina, and guña–Geoffroy's cat.

Can more data help to reconcile the genotype versus phenotype debate? Seymour admits that finding more stable characters was difficult.

Seymour's next logical step was to combine the morphological and molecular data together in a single analysis. He used 22 anatomical characters and 52 DNA characters. Recall Seymour's study was done in early 2000 and molecular analysis was not nearly so sophisticated as it is today. In this case, the combined data confirmed the family tree derived from the molecular data. This might have been the case because each character was equally weighted and there were more than twice as many DNA characters as morphological characters.

What's really happening?

Traditional taxonomy is a way of organizing organisms according to their functional morphology, or phenotype. Note that an implicit assumption is that organisms with similar morphologies, phenotypes, are most closely related. Since the observed patterns in morphology are products of natural selection and the environment, similar selection pressures in similar environments produce similar optimal solutions. This is a problem



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for traditional taxonomists.

Traditional taxonomists believe it is more likely that a character is shared by common descent than by independent, or convergent, evolution. Convergent evolution is the development of similar external morphology in organisms that are unrelated (except through distant ancestors) as each adapts to a similar mode of life (Allaby 1999). Naturalists have long recognized that unrelated organisms with similar modes of life living in similar environments independently evolve similar adaptations.

The animal and plant worlds are full of convergences where similar demands by the environment have evoked similar phenotypic responses in unrelated, or at least not closely related, organisms (Mayr 1963). Many examples of convergent evolution exist in nature. At one time, pangolins were included with anteaters, sloths, and armadillos, together with the Africa armadillo, in the order Edentata, so named because of the lack of some or all of the teeth. It is now thought, however, that any similarities between the pangolins and other ant-eating mammals are the result of similar adaptations to a common way of life and are not indicative of actual relationships. Pangolins are now placed in the order Pholidota; armadillos are placed in the order Tubulidentata (Nowak 1991). Convergent evolution makes taxonomy, let us say, difficult, especially within such a conservative family as the Felidae.

For any group of species, a phylogeny (a relatedness classification) requiring less evolutionary change is more plausible than one requiring more. Phylogenetic inference uses two principles:

Parsimony: Species are arranged in a phylogeny such that the smallest number of evolutionary changes is required.

Distance: Species are arranged in a phylogeny such that each species is grouped with the other species that it shares the most characters with.

Evolution of similar morphological characters that occurs within a family is referred to as parallel evolution. Descendants are as alike as were their ancestors. True parallelism is due to response of a common heritage to similar demands of the environment (similar selection pressures on species with a common heritage). Where no common heritage exists, evolutionary

parallelism is more correctly called convergence. Thus, within the Felidae, parallel evolution is taking place.

Presumably, similarities result either from parallel evolution based on shared genotype or, more importantly, from similarity of selective forces through time acting upon somewhat different genetic substrates (Simpson 1945). Differences result from either discontinuity in the historical development of the two lines or perhaps from inherent limitations, ultimately genomic, in the degree to which alterations in the evolving genetic substrates can be expressed (Eisenberg 1981).

Homologous versus analogous characters

Whenever we consider the problems of comparison, we return to the old conundrum of how to separate homologous from analogous characters. Two structures are said to be homologous if they reflect a similarity in genetic background. To state it another way, homology requires that, in the two lines of descent, the genetic substrate that determines the structure in question be nearly identical for the two forms under

consideration. On the other hand, analogous characters are structural attributes that look similar in two phylogenetic lines but in fact derive from different genetic substrates. The process of forming analogues is phylogenetic convergence. The former is parallel evolution, the latter convergent evolution.

Traditional taxonomy depends on using homologous characters. But which characters are homologous and how do we know? All cats are more-or-less similar to one another in internal structure. Sure, the cheetah is a little different, but stripped of their fur coat it takes an expert to tell a tiger from a lion. As hypercarnivores, cat structure is conservative. After all, there are only so many ways to catch and eat a rat.

The cats we see today evolved relatively recently. This means that an ancestral form reached a continent, radiated, and diversified (Eisenberg 1981), and descendants evolved in parallel under local selection pressures. Small cats likely reached South America when the Panamanian land-bridge formed 3.8 MYA. The oldest cat fossil in South America is 2 MY. Thus, we should expect the Gang of Seven to be similar, so

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similar, in fact, that traditional taxonomists produced a different grouping every examination. Moreover, there was no way of approximating when any of the eight widely accepted lineages of cats separated from common ancestors.

Within the cats there is much individual variability in morphological characters and coat pattern. Both are highly malleable traits that are shaped by the local environment. Consider the similarities between the ocelot and the leopard cat, both nocturnal predators of rodents; the Andean cat, Pallas' cat, and the Chinese mountain cat living in cold inhospitable environments; the margay and marbled cat, both highly arboreal, the Asiatic golden cat and African golden cat; and the jaguarundi and bay cat. Parallel evolution and similar selective pressures shaped malleable phenotypic characters and produced similar forms in similar environments in different continents.

In fact, the taxonomy of the cats produced by the analysis of phenotypic characters results in those cats that are similar in physical appearance being placed most closely together. The ocelot-margay-tigrina placement serves as an example.

The familial relationships are, however, preserved in the DNA. Thus, unraveling the genotype without regard to environmental forces, arguing over homologous and analogous characters, or deciding which bones and teeth should be used to produce a taxonomy, should reveal true familial relationships. Analysis of the genotype results in a taxonomy that places most closely together those cats that are most closely related by descent—by blood. The result is that the ocelot and margay are sister species just as the guinea and Geoffroy's cat are sister species; the tigrina is a once removed cousin. Despite obvious coat pattern, and tooth and skull differences, the pampas cat is a single species most closely related to the Andean cat. The jaguarundi is not closely related to the Gang of Seven.

Though the differences appear in the leaves of the classification tree, they are fundamental to our understanding of so conservatively evolved a family as the Felidae. In the Felidae, evolution has produced the most perfect terrestrial predators. Adjusting each population of a species precisely to its changing habitat requires very subtle changes to each local phenotype. Even nature has a hard time tweaking per-

fection. Familiar relationships are preserved not in what we see, readily malleable characters as teeth and bones, but in what we cannot see—the molecules held by DNA.

The leaves of the classification tree cannot be casually rearranged to agree. Reconciliation of the two methodologies is neither justified nor required. After all, science is the search for truth, a quest that has no end. Does it really matter? Charles Darwin recognized that populations evolve. Thus, each distinct population of every species of wildcat should be conserved. •

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Free Food: ...some work required

Sustainable Selections, a new division of Landfill Diversion Innovations, has launched their Animal Feed Program. The plan, which utilizes expired sell-by date meat products and daily produce surplus from national retailers, provides animal caretakers an inexpensive option to lower operating costs.

Project Manager, Robin Sweere, stated, "America's wasteful habits are creating an unnecessary burden on our landfills. In the meantime, numerous animal caretakers across the country face the reality of closure due to feed costs. We recognized the possibility of providing a dual solution to the dilemma and started Sustainable Selections."

This project has been under development and testing in several states. Several large feline sanctuaries have signed up to collect this animal food resource. Participating facilities such as Tigers for Tomorrow, Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, and Serenity Springs Wildlife Center have collected from both Super Wal-Marts and Sam's Club retail stores. Collection of refrigerated meat is made weekly, or in some cases can be picked up more often. Some managers have worked with participants to increase convenience by separating meats according to type and storing it frozen. The testing facilities have been collecting from as many as a few dozen stores weekly.

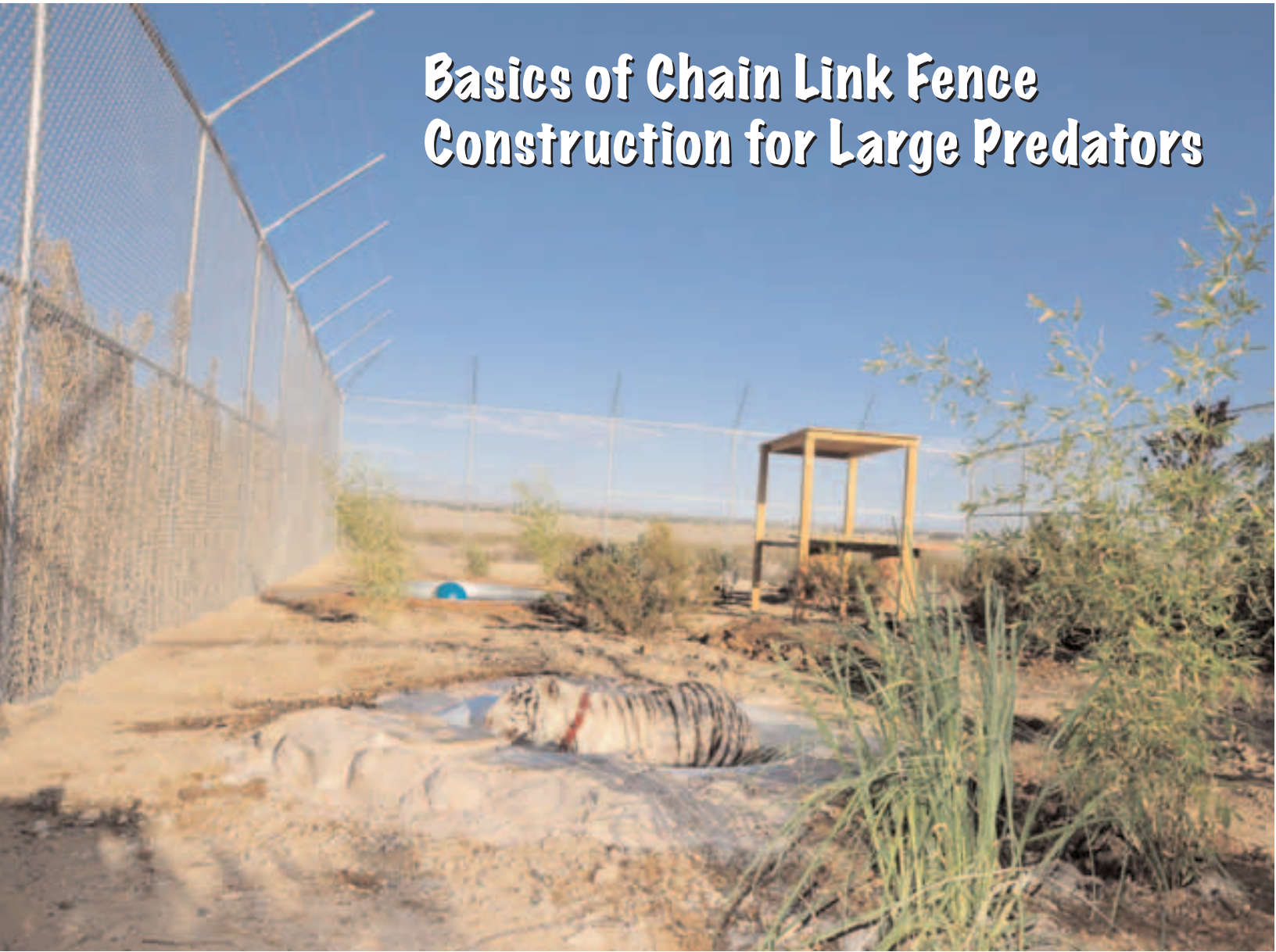
FCF members may have seen advertisements for this "free" food program under the name of another zoological organization, but Sustainable Selections does not restrict participation to that organization's members, nor just to facilities that are federally 501(c)(3) tax-exempt. In fact, Sustainable Selections hopes to benefit the entire animal community by cooperating with everyone.

With the success and positive feedback from participating test facilities, Sustainable Selections is preparing to greatly expand their contacts this fall and offer this food resource all across the country.

The amount of meat available at each retail location depends upon the manager's ability to accurately judge the buying pub-

Continued 51

Basics of Chain Link Fence Construction for Large Predators



By Zuzana Kukol, www.REXANO.org

I have been a private owner of large predators for many years. After living in a rather extremely wet and moldy climate of Washington State, and now the very dry Nevada, I gave up on the wooden cage posts to construct enclosures for our animals. All our cages always were, and still are, constructed of metal posts and chain link material, which will hopefully assure a longer life for the animals' cages and habitats.

Our latest project was to add two 12 feet tall, 6 and 9 gauge chain link big cat cages, topped with V-arm barbed wire. One cage

was around 5,000 square feet. Another cage is around 2,000 square feet, attached to an existing 600 square foot cage. The sliding door operated from the outside will be installed between these two cages.

We buy our material from a local chain link contractor who builds commercial and residential fences, but they also do retail sale of material to "do it yourself" folks like us. Since tall, heavy-duty chain link is not the usual residential material, it often has to be special ordered, which can take few weeks, so plan ahead. While you are waiting for the delivery of the fencing, you can

start preparing the soil.

My fiancée, Scott Shoemaker, did most of the work himself, with wonderful help from FCF editor, Mike Frieze, who visited us from California for one weekend, followed by another FCF member from Las Vegas, Brian Ferko, who came here few times on his days off. Mike is a rather white-collar office guy, so hopefully this experience made him little tougher.

This job was done mostly by one person, Scott, but in some cases, such as hanging heavy and bulky 6 gauge, 12 feet tall fabric, three people were needed.



2. To level the ground for the cage perimeter fencing, we rented skid steer from the local heavy equipment place (not the Bobcat brand), and Scott got to work.

1. The soil around here in the Nevada desert is rocky, hard, dry, and has occasional ditches caused by heavy rains when the soil cannot absorb all the water. Mark the cage perimeter with paint or chalk.



4. If your soil is dry, some soil might collapse in the freshly dug hole. Just use a post-hole digger to get the soil out of the hole, like Scott demonstrates.

3. We also rented an auger attachment for the skid steer to dig the holes for the chain link poles. For 12 feet tall cages, the hole for the pole should be at least 3-4 feet deep. On average, we dig holes every 8-10 feet apart.

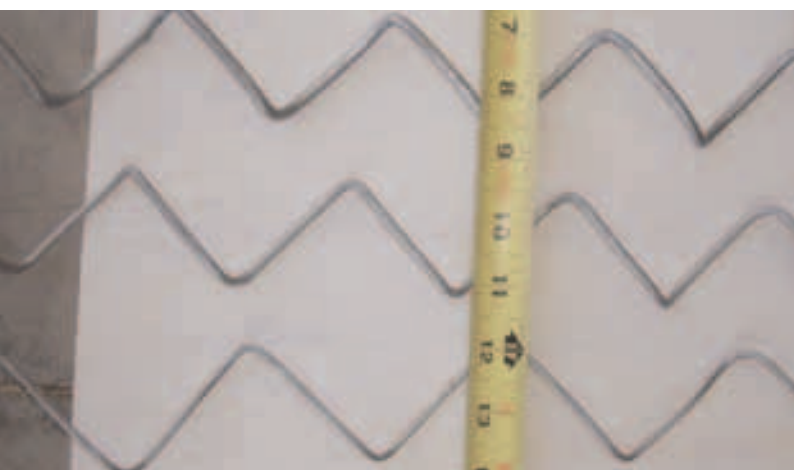


5. Buying material—Fence footage and number of poles: Our cage was tall with no top/roof, only V-arm barbed wire at the top. Measure how many feet of chain link fabric you will need and get a few extra feet. Depending on the shape of your cage, you will need thicker corner poles (terminal posts) (four for square or rectangular cage), also two for each gate. Like mentioned before, regular 'line posts' are 8-10 feet apart. To get the number of regular line posts needed, divide the total chain link footage for your cage by 8 to 10, and subtract the number of thicker corner poles used. The length of the vertical poles depends on how deep your hole is. In our case, it was 12 feet above ground, plus three feet in the ground. We bought 15 feet poles. For 12 foot tall cage, we recommend three levels of so-called "top rail" post, one each at the top, middle, and bottom. To get the correct number of feet of top rail post, multiply the chain link linear footage needed by number three.





7. Another needed tool is strap puller to stretch the chain link fabric once attached to the posts.



9. Other than deciding on the length of the poles, taking the depth of the hole into the consideration, the diameter is another important factor. The poles with the biggest diameter are usually used as corner posts and door posts, the medium diameter is the regular line posts to attach the chain link fabric, and the smallest diameter is used as top, middle, and bottom rail. Some builders use medium line posts at the bottom for extra strength. While the same diameter poles might look the same on the outside, it is important to consider the thickness of the metal used to make the poles. The dog kennels and poles available at hardware stores are usually the thin metal light weight poles. For tigers and lions, we used the heavy weight (full weight) and middle weight thick poles. See the difference in the material thickness in the pictures.

10. Tension bars need to be the height of the actual above-the-ground fence (One for each post, one for each gate post and two for each corner post). V-barbed wire arm (middle), one for each post. Note it has a hole at the bottom for top rail to go through. Barbed wire rolls: the amount depends on how many strands you want to run around the top of the cage perimeter. We run four strands inside the V arm and three on the outside, (seven strands total). To get the final linear footage of barbed wire needed, we multiplied the linear footage of chain link by number seven.

6. In addition to the regular garage tools most real men have like shovel, hammer, wheelbarrow, string, chalk line, pipe cutter, carpenter level, wrench, hacksaw, pliers, drill, ladder, etc, you will need barbed wire stretcher to attach and stretch barbed wire at the top.



8. The 11 gauge chain link is OK for smaller cats and for the roofs for topped cages. When dealing with lions and tigers, we recommend 6 or 9 gauge for the enclosure walls. The smaller the number, the thicker the wire. Pictured is 6, 9, and 11 gauge.





11. Small hardware: These too come in regular and heavy strengths. From left to right: end rail clamp, line rail clamp, fence wire tie, tension band, top rail sleeve, gate latch (more on gate hanging hardware later).



12. Corner post hardware: rail end band around it, attached to the rail end at the end of the top rail. It is used to attach top, middle and bottom horizontal rails to the big corner and door posts.



13. Line rail clamps are used to attach middle and bottom rails to the regular line posts. Fence wire ties are used to attach chain link fabric to the rails and posts.



14. Picture shows the use of tension bands to attach the chain link to the posts and to the door frame. It also demonstrates the attachment of the middle rail and above the door rail to the gate posts using rail end and rail end band.



15. Top rail sleeve is used to attach two top rails



16. Heavy gate latch is attached to the gate. Use one to two per door for extra security.



18. Mike carries the long poles to be put into the dug holes and poured with concrete mix. Large rocks are placed in the hole to temporarily hold the pole vertical. The poles are plumbed with a bubble level.

17. We bought a small plastic cement mixer from the hardware store. Mike Friese mixes the concrete for the poles.



20. Scott and Mike keep working on the cage frame, attaching the top rail to the posts, through the V-barbed wire arm.

19. Scott is attaching strings to the poles to assure the top rail will be attached in a straight line.



21. Mike is attaching top rail sleeve to the top rail, following the string attached to poles, which is used as a guide to make sure all is in a straight line



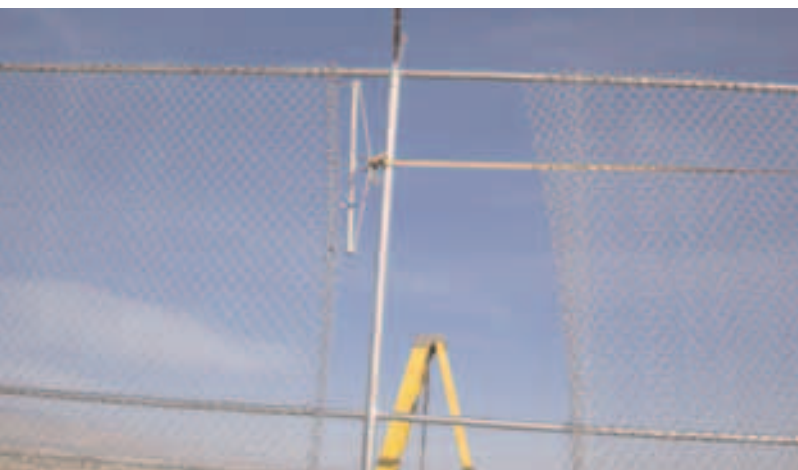
22. Once the cage frame was finished, with all the poles and top, middle and bottom rails in place, it was time to hang the chain link, using ladders and different tie downs and winch straps to get it up to the 12 foot height.





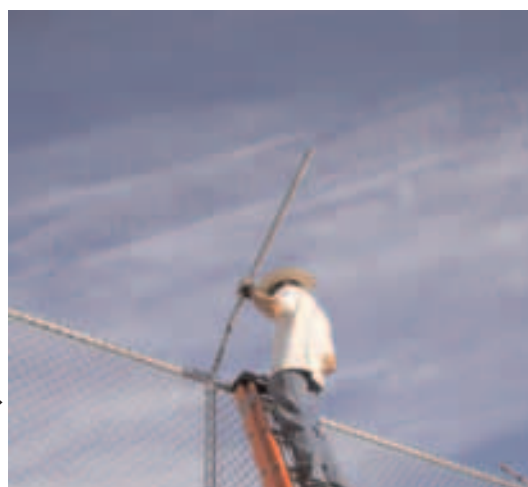
24. Brian and Scott attaching 6 gauge chain link with the help of tie down straps and winch or rope.

23. Fellow FCF member Brian Ferko is attaching the tension bar to the 6 gauge chain link fabric. Tension bar can also be attached after the fabric is already hanging from the frame. Fabric should be attached to the frame from the inside.



26. Scott attaches 4 foot long pipe to extend the length of the V-barbed wire arm inside the cage.

25. Strap puller is used to stretch the chain link fabric.



27. Scott is using barbed wire stretcher to stretch the barbed wire.



28. Finished the top of the cages with barbed wire attached, showing the use of corner V-barbed wire arms above the door. The short black sticks are the optional hot wire attachments.



30. We hang the doors to the gate hinge pole, and then align the second gate pole with the gate latch, and pour concrete in the pole hole.



29. We are not welders, so our doors were made by the chain link company using our size specifications. Doors should have at least one horizontal bar or even two if the doors are tall.



31. Adjustable industrial arm hinge, the one pictured, also only allows the door to open only in one direction, inside, as is required by law in some states. Use 2-3 per door.



32. We use chain around hinges and latches. In case the gate hardware screws/bolts get loose, the chain will still hold the door in place.



33. If you are using residential or nut and bolt gate hinges, another way to assure the doors only open inside is to attach a metal bar or pole on the outside of the door frame. This metal bar will act as a stop for the door top open to the outside.



34. We pour concrete pads inside the cages, by the door, for easy cleaning. It also prevents animals from digging under the door.



35. With nice landscaping, you get the pleasing combination of botanical and zoological garden in your own backyard.



36. It is a good idea to have warning signs on your double entry and cage gates.



37. Our two new cages share the double entry area. It is 12 feet tall, and in an emergency situation can be used as another cage, if we were willing to sacrifice our landscaping and patio furniture.



38. As an extra precaution, we use padlocks on our cages. We also use chain around hinges and latches in case the gate hardware gets loose.

39. We used a service-type wide door to access the shared double entry area. This gate too has warning signs and chain near hinges for extra security,



40. Any large predator cage should be surrounded by a perimeter fence that is at least four feet away from the cage, and at least eight feet tall. Ours has a V-barbed wire arm and hot wire at the top and bottom. •

FCF Feline Census—The Sad State of Cougars

By Lynn Culver

The feline census is holding about steady, even with losses and gains in member reporting. Presently it contains 2,538 felines owned by 186 active members. I know we have more felines and more members holding that are not participating in the census, and this is making accuracy in reporting more difficult. It is never too late to enter your felines in the FCF census and if you have not visited the members-only section of the FCF web site recently, please take some time to update this important database.

This time I wish to share some information on the cougar population. As a former cougar breeder who has maintained this species at my facility since 1985, I can draw a lot of conclusions based on my personal experience and observations, as well as by looking at this data. Presently there are 221 cougars held by 67 reporting facilities.

Of the reporting facilities, 16 are considered sanctuaries and they hold 123 cougars. There are 13 zoos reporting this felines and

this accounts for 33 cougars. Eight exhibitor members hold 15 cats and the number of private owners add up to 26 persons holding 45 cats. Of the zoo and exhibitor members, I found 13 facilities that held more than one cougar, but of those facilities, only six listed both male and female cougars that could potentially reproduce. Additionally, under the owners listing, while there were five reporting with more than one cougar, only two owners listed cougars of both sexes and one of those owners resides in a state that prohibits the breeding of this species.

This is an incredible shrinking of the cougar gene pool. It is literally a puddle now and long-term genetic diversity is definitely threatened by this catastrophic population implosion. About 55% of the cougar population is residing in sanctuary habitat. The passage of laws that prohibit pet ownership, the tightening of the regulations on the sale and exhibition of these felines, and the loss of economic incentive to breed or exhibit the species have all contributed to a tremendous loss of available habitat and



Home grown cougar: Bart Culver object plays with Arjan.



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forced many cougars to be relocated into sanctuary habitat.

As a commercial breeder of cougars from 1990 to 1997, I can clearly remember the abundance with which this species was produced. It was not uncommon for there to be as many as four litters of cougars advertised in the national publication called *Animal Finders' Guide* at the same time as I was promoting my own offspring.

Today it is an entirely different world. I have been looking for cougar offspring for the past year. I did find a couple of breeders, but after many calls to FCF member zoos, I realized we have a near crisis on our hands.

Cougars are an extremely important species because they are the largest feline native to the US. Once populating nearly every state before the arrival of the European settlers, by the 1980s this species was thought to only exist in the most remote sections of the ten western states and the swamps of southern Florida.

The large municipal and AZA zoos participating in the collection master plans were discouraged from displaying this native cat, because cage space was needed for snow leopard, jaguar, and Amur leopard.

It has been the niche of the independent zoos and education centers to offer the public opportunities to see, learn about, and experience this big cat first-hand.

Will there be puma in captivity in the future? Our genetic stock is certainly depleted. The species is native to the US and orphans are brought into captivity so there are some options for replenishment.

Most of the potential habitat for cougars has been legislated out of existence. Zoos and sanctuaries are the main habitat now. In just a very few states, private owners and exhibitors can also maintain this species. But states such as Michigan or Washington, where exhibitors are allowed to possess cougar, they are not allowed to breed the species.

While the loss of cougar habitat in our society saddens me greatly, the success of this native cat to return to its former haunts does bring me joy. Since the 1990s, state G & F agencies have been consistently blaming the release of privately held cougars as

the reason for an increase in sightings in areas thought not to contain the big cats. I have always been doubtful of these assertions, based upon my own personal experience. Captive cougars are often declawed and imprinted on humans. These facts make them poor candidates for a successful reintroduction into nature. The stories of accidentally escaped pumas I am aware of have all ended in either uneventful recapture or, sadly, their death. Seems there is no shortage of frightened citizens armed with guns that shoot first and ask questions later.

Finally however, some hard data in the form of radio collar studies has proven

determined to be from the Black Hills of South Dakota population. In October of 2008, a cougar traveled 550 miles from South Dakota to Saskatchewan before being shot three times. And last month the Georgia Department of Natural resources had to admit that the cougar shot in Trout county, GA last November was proven by genetic testing to be the same genetic stock as the panthers found in the Everglades of southern Florida.

If we lose our great cats in captivity but gain them in nature, it will be a fair trade. I will always revere the experiences I have been fortunate to share with the many cougars that I have come to know and love over the years. My husband and I are truly blessed to have been at the right place at the right time to purchase a cougar cub. After 25 years of owning cougars, I know that I am probably nearing the end of this adventure. Like so many other breeders, we have retired. •

what I long suspected. America's great cat is making a comeback on its own. While we have kept its spirit alive and helped educate a nation on the need to tolerate and value this incredible native feline, it has been quietly settling into new territories.

We now know for a fact that cougars are traveling long distances to establish home ranges in suitable unoccupied territories. In May 2004 a radio collared dispersing sub-adult male cougar was hit by a train in Red Rock, Oklahoma, more than 700 miles from the Black Hills of South Dakota where it originated. In February of 2006 a radio collared female cougar traveled 830 miles through Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado. In April of 2008 a cougar shot in the North Side of Chicago was genetically

LA Has Some Cool Cats...

...and I'm not talking about the ones you might see
cruising the boulevard when the weather is good.

By Officer Martin Wall,
California Department of Game and Fish

If one looks just above the lights of Sun-set, Topanga, Whittier, Foothill, or almost any of the popular major streets toward the edges of the Los Angeles basin, I can guarantee that at least one of our biggest native cats is up there, looking back. As a California Fish and Game officer, I am often called to address questions and concerns regarding the interactions between the people of LA and the wildlife, including mountain lions that exist just outside of our fences and yards.

These concerns are pretty predictable. One story on the news, true or not, and the public becomes extremely sensitive to the subject of mountain lions and the danger

they may pose. Here is an example that always makes me chuckle: An adult cougar was killed on a major street in a rural fringe neighborhood of LA. Of course the media was all over the story. They hyped up everything about mountain lions but never mentioned how we should slow down and pay attention to our driving. (I was curious how someone could hit a 125-pound animal and not stop or report it!) In the next 24 hours, a half-dozen reports of mountain lion sightings came in to the Region 5 Fish and Game office. None of them had any real merit and no field response was necessary. Then, one report came in that we could not ignore. A woman was reporting that a mountain lion was eating her neighbor's Dalmatian dog on the hillside behind her

house. As usual, there were kids playing in the area too. This one I could not explain away or ignore. The caller passed all of my usual "sanity" and observation tests so I was out the door as soon as I got off the telephone with her.

The neighborhood where this was occurring was located like most of them: Get off the freeway in the general area, head toward the mountains a short distance, look for a crowd of people or helicopters, and take note of the reporters beginning to follow. I pulled up at the house and quickly spotted the objects of concern in the chaparral behind the houses. "Hmmm... something doesn't look quite right." So I donned my spotting scope and focused on the objects. When I realized what I was looking at, I began to smile. I put the scope back in the truck and looked at the small crowd that had gathered. In the crowd was a rather portly bald-headed gentleman that was smiling too. I noticed he had a very nice pair of binoculars hanging around his neck so I knew why he was smiling. I telephoned the original reporting party who was in her house watching events unfold and I asked her if she normally wore glasses. When she said, "yes," I asked her if she would put them on and look again. After a short silence, she came back on the phone and said, "Oh my god. I am so sorry," and hung up.

It seems the neighborhood kids had taken a "cow print" couch cushion up on the hill for paintball target practice and the family dog (yellow lab) had found his favorite bed and was laying on it. That night the news teaser was "Mountain lion spotted in upscale San Fernando Valley neighborhood but state wildlife officials were unable to locate it."

For every story like the one above there is at least one that is exactly as reported. Not too long after the couch cushion story, a woman called to report that a mountain lion was in the landscaping of the hill in her backyard. When I asked her what it was



"When I got there, everything was just as she had described. We walked outside and the lion stood up and looked at us so I snapped a photo for the scrapbook."

doing, she said that it appeared to be sleeping but it would stand up and look at her when she went outside. She asked, “What should I do?” so I said, “Don’t go outside.” I had other errands to do in her area so I offered to stop by her house. When I got there, everything was just as she had described. We walked outside and the lion stood up and looked at us so I snapped a photo for the scrapbook.

I have learned to not be surprised by what the public may tell me. I’ve also learned to not openly doubt them either until I can back up my thoughts. One day I spoke with a woman who told me that there was a cougar that kept coming to her porch and eating her housecat’s food from the bowl. I had talked to several people that week with what turned out to be bobcat problems so I assumed her situation would be another one of the same. She was in the general area I would be in later that day so I promised to go by her house and look at what she said were fresh mountain lion tracks in her flowerbed. Before that though, I had to go look at what was reported to be a photograph of a snow leopard in a backyard near Santa Clarita. You can probably guess what I found in both cases: First I was shown a picture of a snow leopard sitting by a swing set in the back yard I was standing in; then at the second house I was shown some perfect mountain lion tracks in fresh dirt by an empty food bowl. That day was the last day I felt like telling anyone they were crazy.

Often when I respond to these calls I am not sure if I’m supposed to save the people from the mountain lion or the mountain lion from the people. I have found though, if the two continue to live next to each other, and the lion gets too comfortable, it will likely be fatal for the lion. California Fish and Game Code section 4803 dictates that when a person reports that a mountain lion has killed one of their animals, and that the depredation is confirmed by the investigating officer, a permit to kill the lion shall be

issued. Whether we are talking about a speeding Buick or a speeding bullet, people are just dangerous to mountain lions. And in all fairness, lions can be dangerous to people too.

If I had to summarize the cougar’s overall species’ health in Los Angeles County, I would have to say that they are doing just fine—for the moment. To the scientists and researchers this may sound pretty unprofessional, anecdotal at best. But from where I am sitting, they seem to be everywhere they should be, and a lot of places they shouldn’t be. Precise population numbers could be debated by scholars to no satisfactory end but all would have to agree that the population is at least stable, if not increasing.

Above, where I used the phrase, “for the moment, my point was that the status of the mountain lion in certain areas could change. This possible change will depend on the lion’s ability to adapt and our willingness to evaluate and mitigate how we affect the wildlife habitat. Currently, the National Park Service is conducting an extensive mountain lion population and distribution study in the LA basin on this very topic. They are working mostly in the Santa Monica and Santa Susana Mountains that parallel the coastline just north of Los Angeles. I do not want to steal any of their thunder but I will say that the newest GPS-equipped radio telemetry collars are amazing and they are providing interesting data.

Hopefully, the collars will provide enough information so that some key questions about mountain lion behavior and movements in a semi open-space area can be answered. For example, I know that mountain lions try to cross busy freeways in LA. I get to pick them up when they do not make it. What I never could have guessed is just how often they succeed. The collars may just help us determine how we can make it easier for the wildlife to get around in LA’s open spaces as the web of man-made barriers gets tighter and tighter. •



From a backyard in Pasadena next to NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, (JPL). JPL had an unintentional herd of about 175 deer that had to be excluded with fencing and hazing. The deer removal was successful but it left quite a bit of “lion food” in the surrounding habitat and neighborhood. I would say this guy ate well for quite a while. This picture was taken from about 20 feet. The blur in the lower right-hand corner is from the very strong chain-link fence that was separating people from mountain lions. Fence or no fence, you still get a little tingle when you are this close to a wild lion.

Journal Editor Resigns

The FCF board is accepting applications for a new journal editor. After four years of service to the FCF our editor Mike Friese has asked to be replaced starting no later than the Jan/Feb 2010 issue. Journal layout editor is one of the most important positions in the FCF. Applicants need to be proficient with Adobe InDesign or QuarkXpress and able to work with the executive director and other journal staff to help develop and shape each issue. This position requires a considerable commitment of time and creativity during a two-week period every other month. If interested in this position, please contact Lynn Culver at 479-394-5235, or email at executivedirector@felienconservation.org

FCF Member Fights to Keep His Cats

By Bart Culver

In 1987 when Lynn and I joined the FCF (then called LIOC), Fred Boyajian was its president. Like Ken Hatfield before him, Fred was striving with all his might to make the ship he captained seaworthy and steer a proper course to weather the storms he saw on the horizon. We were quite impressed with Fred's leadership and quite surprised when some others were not. It took much longer than it should have to get the helm to respond. But a lot of what FCF has accomplished since 1987 really began with Fred.

Once again Fred Boyajian is fighting the good fight at considerable cost to himself. Some NIMBYs in Atlanta are using a strategy against Fred that we have seen here in Arkansas. No new laws are being proposed but the old ones are being interpreted by bureaucrats in a completely different and contrary way. It could be a neighbor exerting undue influence or animal-rights shills infiltrating government. But suddenly the same laws under which Fred has been allowed to have cats for the last 32 years are being used to say he cannot have cats. Fred has a good attorney. The brief I read makes it abundantly clear that several arbitrary and capricious acts have combined to create an unfair situation.

On September 26, 2007 the city of Atlanta cited Fred for commercial use of an accessory structure. (i.e. the cat compound. Neither the cats nor the structure is prohibited by ordinance.) December 20, 2007 a city official cited Fred for operating a business without a license. The applicable law contains this broad exception:

"nothing contained in this article shall be interpreted to require any person who may engage in casual or isolated activity and commercial transactions involving personal assets and not the principal occupation of the individual, to obtain a business tax registration and pay a tax therefore."

Fred makes his living from an ornamental brass business and this exception has been deemed to apply to him for 32 years. December 20, 2007 at trial, regardless of the fact there is no ordinance stating so, and despite the city's prior positions, city officials testified that housing and breeding of exotic cats is not permitted in an R2 zone.

Judgment was entered against Fred and he was ordered to pay a \$1,000 fine and to remove the cats within 30 days. Sentence has been suspended pending appeal.

DNR subsequently refused to renew Fred's license for his "failure" to obtain the city of Atlanta's business license. Fred's attorneys attempted to work with the DNR to resolve this issue. On June 4, 2009, DNR gave an ultimatum. DNR would renew his license only if Fred relocates outside Atlanta. On July 6, 2009 Fred filed suit in superior court against the city of Atlanta, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the individuals involved. He argues the following:

Plaintiff's due process rights have been violated because the enactment is unconstitutionally vague and officials have interpreted it in an arbitrary, capricious, and irrational fashion, abusing their power and employing it as an instrument of oppression. The city and DNR allowed plaintiff to raise his cats at the same address for 26 years without interference. Plaintiff reasonably and detrimentally relied on defendant's actions. Defendant's retroactive interpretation and criminal punishment is an unconstitutional taking without compensation that violates the bill of attainder and

ex post facto clauses of United States and Georgia constitutions. Defendants are precluded from changing their positions by equitable principals of estoppel, laches, and waiver. Plaintiff seeks a declaratory judgment, injunction against enforcement, attorney fees and costs, and an award of actual, nominal, and compensatory damages.

Does any of this sound familiar to you? It does to us. We know of several instances where wildlife officers have refused to issue permits to qualified people because those officials decided that the wording of the law did not properly express its real intent. These are very talented folks: they know what the people who wrote the law should have done, and how to fix it, just do away with that obnoxious due process nonsense. Fortunately their superiors have not yet embraced the concept of improvisational law enforcement. But it is catching on among all sorts of extremists who think herding legislators is too much work. Its not surprising that people who crave power and love conformity, can sometimes be found wearing uniforms. Looks like Fred stepped into a whole nest of 'em in Atlanta. If you want to help him kick them in their khaki patoots or just cheer him on, we are sure he'd appreciate your support. •



Circa 1979: A much, much younger Fred Boyajian with his margay, BeBop.

FCF Online Outreach Program

By Erin Patters

I am proud to be the messenger of the beginning of a successful branching out of the FCF into the (sometimes intimidating) technical world, namely, the World Wide Web. Do not be frightened away or turn the page just yet; I will explain an easy way for any person not accustomed to the internet to be a part of this as well.

A few board of directors meetings ago, I sat quietly and absorbed not only the atmosphere, controversial topics, lessons, and one yummy pizza, but a rather surprising short ended stick on the website advertising front. Not through any fault of any of the directors, with every one of them having so much on their plate to run our organization successfully, I found myself curious as to why such an immense audience available through the Internet has as yet gone almost untapped. The FCF began and continues a successful and useful website that I have heard countless times being used as a reference for

any feline conservation oriented questions as well as a site to capture people's attention to our

mission statement and work. However successful the FCF home page stays, it seems necessary to branch into wider areas of the web and create various portals for people to find and hopefully sign on with the FCF. What I have fondly dubbed the Online Outreach Program is simply an attempt to reach more people through well-known, already established venues and spread the word about our organization.

The first front I hit was myspace.com, which is stereotypically a site for the networking of younger adults, but which almost unnoticed, has grown into so much more. I researched various businesses, organizations, and enterprises and their input on myspace.com, and found that so many have had such successful advertising through the site simply for the fact that it holds at least 47.3 million members who continually search and interact within that domain on a daily basis for all matter of subjects. A simple search from the myspace.com home page on absolutely *any* subject you choose will show that almost every established business or organization

has a MySpace of their own, copyrighted and continually creating more traffic between their home page and their MySpace page.

I am proud to announce that through networking and spreading the message that our organization is now on MySpace. We just recently hit 1,000 "friends" of the Feline Conservation Federation! If even a fraction of those were to follow the links placed there to our home page and join, it will provide more members, thus member dues. If not, it will assuredly create awareness of our organization and it's all free!

I recently began to follow the same approach of www.facebook.com, and while it is more limited in its ability to advertise without purchasing an ad to place in our chosen demographic, the same principle stands. If we can spread the word about the FCF through already established

domains that have millions of members, then it allows us a virtually effortless advertising tool guaranteed to be seen by at least a portion of the website's members and frequent visitors.

Now, here is where all of you come in, my fellow members: One of the other related topics that came up in the same board of director's meeting was the question as to why those of us that use and have websites of our own (be they MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo, whatever) do not have a link to the FCF homepage on their sites, as it provides a free and effortless avenue for more traffic between your website's visitors and the FCF. One of the first things one must understand about the internet is that the more often a subject is mentioned in any way, the more it is brought up first in searches and ads. By simply placing what is called a "banner" (a picture with a link) for the FCF on any website, email, or blog, there is more FCF traffic. This results in more search matches. This helps spread the word. The more people who do not know we exist see us mentioned in any place

they visit, the more like-minded people who will have the opportunity to join. I will provide a banner for any member who wishes to have one, just email me at fcmyspace@gmail.com. I will relay the very simple instructions as well as the banner for any of our pages. Those of you that have a MySpace or Facebook account, just add us and place us in your top friends so all those lazy browsers you know looking for something interesting to do while surfing the web can find us easily.

For those of you who do not have a MySpace or Facebook account, it is as easy as having an email address and takes only few minutes to register and create one. Both sites will prompt and lead you through registration once going to their home page. Then you can place a banner/link on your new web page and taa-daa: a free and easy way to help our organization.

The easiest way to find us is to go to myspace.com and facebook.com and look in the top left hand corner; there will be a tiny search box. Type in Feline Conservation Federation, which will then take you to a new page where our website will be the first link you see, sort of like searching for things using google.com, yahoo.com or any other search engine. What you just did is what thousands of others do when typing in any related word such as feline, conservation, exotic felid, wildlife, kitty,

what have you. It's that simple for people to find us. Click it and enjoy the newest additions to our online family. Please spread the word. Without this tiny effort by our members, so much of a larger audience will never hear about our organization.

If anyone has any questions about either of our new sites, how to create a new account, or anything related to the Online Outreach Program, please feel free to email me at fcmyspace@gmail.com. I will do my best to help you. All ideas and constructive criticisms are appreciated. Let's get our organization to the numbers it deserves and spread the word! •



Director Of Public Relations Position Open for Appointment

The position of Director of Public Relations is open at this time due to the resignation of Dan Stockdale. If you have experience writing press releases, or have journalism experience, or are comfortable speaking before media and press, and have a desire to work to further the messages of the Feline Conservation Federation as a working board member, please contact the president, Kevin Chambers, by phone or email.

The board will consider all serious inquiries and hopes to make an appointment later this year. Appointment to a board position requires internet access and email communication. Board members are expected to attend the annual convention. Board members discuss FCF business using a Yahoo discussion board and usually hold three or four meetings annually on the FCF web site forums. For additional information about service on the FCF board of directors, you can review the FCF constitution and FCF bylaws published in the members-only section of the FCF web site.

Internet Video to be Produced

During the recent board meeting in Salinas, the FCF board of directors discussed producing a short internet video to display the importance of captive feline husbandry. This video will be a direct response to the ubiquitous negative propaganda concerning exotic cats in captivity. The most common current media campaigns are fear-based and impress upon the public that privately held exotic felines should be both pitied and feared. It is important for FCF to help provide the public with an alternative viewpoint and dispel many of the common-held misconceptions.

The video will be approximately 5-10 minutes, which turns out to be both the attention span of the average internet viewer and the maximum allowable YouTube video length. The central theme of the video will be to systematically show that while wild conservation is the ultimate goal in saving exotic felines, due to our current global circumstances, in many cases this may be impossible. Because of habitat loss

and poaching, captively maintaining viable gene pools may be, in many cases, the only effective method of preventing species extinction.

The video will be produced this fall by FCF Director of Legislation, Robert Johnson. Any input or comments are welcome and can be sent to legislations@felineconservation.org.

Robert M Johnson

Senior Trainer

The Institute of Greatly Endangered and Rare Species

www.TheFlyingLiger.com

Legislation Report

To strengthen social bonds and to address issues concerning the evolution of wildlife legislation in the U.S., T.I.G.E.R.S. recently played host to Congressman Henry Brown at its preserve in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Congressman Brown is the ranking member of the Congressional Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife. He is also responsible for recently creating the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp bill, which would provide substantial funding for wildlife conservation around the globe.

Robert M Johnson,

FCF Director of Legislation



T.I.G.E.R.S. team shares a snow white tiger cub with Congressman Brown.

Looking for Laptop

The FCF is in need of a laptop computer and a multimedia projector that is compatible with the electrical system used in South Africa (220V, 50Hz), which is different

from that in the USA. (Note: all laptops and nearly all projectors made today are compatible with South Africa power with just the addition of an inexpensive but rhinoceros-sized plug adapter.) These items will be donated to the Cat Conservation Trust for use in school educational programs for the four small cat species in Southern Africa. If anyone has any such equipment or contacts for some company that does have them and would appreciate the tax-deductible donation, please contact our Director of Conservation, Pat Callahan.

The Rare Species Fund and FCF Team-Up

The Rare Species Fund (RSF) was established by T.I.G.E.R.S. Preservation Station to provide critical funding to on-the-ground, international wildlife conservation programs. In the fall of 2008, T.I.G.E.R.S. teamed up with the Feline Conservation Federation to further enhance the Rare Species Fund by allowing the FCF to manage the financial support awarded for feline research and habitat protection projects and to receive contributions to the fund. Donations made to the Rare Species Fund through the Feline Conservation Federation are tax deductible.

The Rare Species Fund (RSF) is continuing its support of conservation efforts for threatened and endangered wild species. The RSF recently provided \$2,000 to the Matabeleland Leopard and Cheetah project in Zimbabwe. Researchers in the Matabeleland wildlife heritage area are currently placing radio transmitter collars on leopards and cheetahs. By tracking their movements, important information about behavior and territories can be gained. The group also helps in live trapping these predators on private lands. The leopards and cheetahs, which would almost certainly be destroyed as nuisance animals, can be safely relocated into protected wildlife parks.

The RSF also provided \$1,000 in ongoing support to the Carnivore Conservation Project in Northern Thailand. Funds are being used to supply in-country teams with appropriate anti-poaching equipment. Headed by Dr. JoGayle Howard, this project is functioning in association with the Smithsonian Institution and is working diligently to secure the wild population of tigers in the Khao Yai National Park.

Registered Handler Program is Now Three-Tiered

Changes to the Registered Handler Program were approved at the annual meeting of the board of directors. The current registration system that delays member registration eligibility until a minimum of two-years experience has been reached is being replaced with a new three-tiered system.

Basic Handler registration has now been revised to begin at one year's handling experience and covers up to five year's experience. A middle level category called "Intermediate Handler" will be for handlers with at least five years experience. The Advanced Handler category remains unchanged and recognized those with ten or more year's experience.

If you have previously registered as a Basic Handler, and you wish to be considered for Intermediate registration, you may indicate this by visiting the members' only section of the FCF web site and clicking on the Registered Handler form.

The form has been updated to give you the ability to update your Handler Registration description or apply for a higher level of handler. There is no fee to update your present registered handlers information or to upgrade to a higher level.

If you submit this form as a request to upgrade to a higher level, approval by the secretary will be required before the upgrade will be valid.

Members who have not participated in this program before who have one year or more experience handling wild felines are encouraged to register. All handler registrations are recorded on your annual FCF membership card that will be mailed out at the end of 2009.

Many of the Basic Handlers will be eligible for Intermediate registration. The secretary will be reviewing all registrations and if enough information is already provided to grant a change in level, it will be done automatically. If your registration did not indicate five years experience, it will not be changed without updating it with additional handling information and requesting the secretary review the request for a change in registration.

The next steps we will be taking with this program is to make registrations viewable to the members in the members-only



Magnetic car door sign presented to Jim Sanderson for the Andean Cat Conservation and Monitoring station in Chile.

section to help inexperienced members seek out mentors.

Door Signs Presented to Jim Sanderson

The FCF presented Dr. Jim Sanderson with two magnetic door signs bearing the FCF logo at the annual FCF convention in Salinas, CA. These signs will be used on the vehicle at the Andean Cat Conservation and Monitoring station in Chile. Kurt Beckelman was instrumental in securing this donation from The Meeks Group, owned by Jerry Crockett, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. These signs will give FCF an international exposure showing our commitment to conserving wild cats both in captivity and in the wild.

New Accreditation Committee Member Appointed

My name is Ron Young and I have recently been elected to the Accreditation Board for the FCF. I look forward to serving in this capacity. I have served on accreditation committees for both the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and for the Zoological Association of America (ZAA), having developed the guidelines for the latter. I was a member of AZA from 1972 until 1999 and a founding member of ZAA and a member of the Board of Directors until 2007.

My zoological career started as a volunteer at the Philadelphia Zoo in the 1960's. In 1967 I became a zookeeper at the Houston Zoological Gardens and in 1971 started as an animal trainer for Busch Gardens Houston. I helped to open the Houston

Busch Gardens and the Williamsburg Busch Gardens. During the late 1970s I helped to close both the Houston Busch Gardens and the Van Nuys Busch Gardens. I became curator of the Tampa Busch Gardens. In 1981, I became general curator of the Greater Baton Rouge Zoo and in 1986 director of Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden in Evansville Indiana. I left the zoo in April of 2000 to open a pet boarding kennel, which I have now operated for nearly 10 years. Although my expertise is in bird propagation, I have worked with all classes of animals. Specifically with cats I have been involved with almost all species. I have hand-reared snow and clouded leopard cubs. Have traveled with Jack Hanna with these same cubs to New York to do the late



night and early morning national T.V. shows. The zoos where I was in charge of the animal collections have reared four sub species of tigers, both African and Asian lions, both African and Asian leopards, sand cats, jungle cats, margay, ocelot, jaguar, bobcat, lynx, serval, and cheetah to name a few.

I have a strong belief in accreditation as a tool to improve our industry. The process of policing ourselves is the best commentary we can bestow on one another. Without the formality of accreditation, we appear to be simply exotic animal hobbyists whom the government will not take seriously. The accreditation process makes a tremendous difference in how we are perceived by local and federal governments. Ultimately all persons holding and propagating exotic wildlife should have an accreditation from some recognized organization of authority.

I hope that each of you is currently working toward accreditation if you are already at that point. If there is anything that I can do to assist you in your process, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me by calling 812-963-1000 or emailing me at mrzoo@att.net.

Conservation Committee Report

At the annual FCF convention, I reported to the board that the Conservation Grant Committee had selected two grant recipients. First award was \$1,400 to Javier Pereira, in Argentina for his work with Geoffroy's cats, for lab supplies, and equipment. Second was \$1,200 to Marion Holmes in South Africa to supply a video projector for her education outreach program. The focus of which is that all predators have a place in the ecosystem. Many South Africans believe predators, such as caracal and servals, are vermin. Poisoning of jackals is common as well. Board member Rob Johnson plans to be in South Africa soon and will take care of getting the unit to her. He may be able to get one donated, and may provide other research related devices to her from other sources.

Both researchers/educators have agreed to recognize FCF's contribution to their work and both have already published articles in the FCF Journal.

Of course, the *Big Story* was the awarding of money to Jim Sanderson for the

Andean Cat Conservation and Monitoring Center. This is certainly a proud moment for the FCF and the generous members who donated their own money for this groundbreaking project. All in all, helping to fund research of wild felids elevates FCF to the status of a top-tier organization. I salute each and every member for their dedication and caring for wild cats species and conservation education. I also want to thank the members of the Conservation Committee and note we have MORE grant applications to review!

—Pat Callahan

FCF at CITES

On behalf of FCF, VC International participated at the 58th meeting of the Standing Committee (SC58) of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The meeting was held in Geneva, Switzerland from July 6-10, 2009. In order to attend meetings of the Standing Committee, non-government organizations must obtain certification from their home government's CITES Management Authority and receive an invitation from the committee. Therefore, FCF is pleased to have a strong relationship with VC International and their ability to represent the interest and viewpoint of FCF at this wildlife and conservation trade treaty meeting.

In brief, SC58 discussed 48 agenda items on a wide range of topics. Of note were: Livelihoods, Substantive Revision of

Resolutions (i.e., transit/transshipment, definition of hunting trophy), E-Commerce of Specimens of Listed Species, International Expert Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings, Purpose Codes on Permits and Certificates, Asian Big Cats, Great Apes, and Rhinoceroses. In addition to the official agenda, VC participated in two "side-events." The first focused on the promotion of private sector compliance and consumer awareness. The second, the establishment of a sustainable use coalition focused on information sharing and opportunities for collaboration specific to maintaining legal wildlife trade. VC International was pleased with the outcomes of SC58. The meeting was somewhat of a "yawner." It certainly lacked the drama and energy of past meetings. Regardless, it was run very efficiently and completed action on all issues of the agenda. While it can be summed up as "sterile," it is felt that our participation at the meeting and "side-events" was to the direct benefit of our member's interests.

The next CITES meeting will be the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) in Doha, Qatar, March 13-25, 2010. The COP is what CITES is all about. SC58's actions provide the base of the agenda at the COP15. All the decisions made at SC58 will be forwarded for consideration at this meeting. Contingent upon funding, FCF hopes to continue supporting VC International's role of monitoring and reporting on issues of most interest to our members. •



CITES meeting

**The Oklahma Class has been Rescheduled
so it is not too late to register for the
FCF Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry Course**

When: Saturday, October 3, 2009

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Where: Holiday Inn Express

2809 North 14th Street

Ponca City, OK

to reserve a room call 580-762-3700

Price: \$95.00 FCF members

\$130.00 non-members

Mail registration form and check to:

A1 Savannahs, c/o Kathrin Stucki

7750 W. Riverview Road,

Ponca City, OK 74601

***You may also register online and pay with Paypal
on the FCF web site under Husbandry Course***

Need more info? e-mail: education@felineconservation.org



This 8-hour course focuses on responsible captive husbandry. Featured topics include: natural history of the feline species, nutrition, health care basics, handling equipment, facility design, behavior conditioning, contingency planning and regulatory agencies. This is an instructor-led, multimedia presentation, complete with student textbook, workshops, final exam and decorative certificate of successful completion.

This course has been recently upgraded. Nutrition includes new info on calcium and vitamins and diet designs. Health care has been updated. There are dozens of new photos of cages, fencing, materials and enrichments, and better feline species photos, and better range maps. The student textbook is now 149 pages of useful information to take home for future reference. Course registration fee also includes lunch.

**Sunday October 4, 9:00 am
Students are invited to tour A1
Savannahs, a USDA licensed
breeding facility for serval and
Savannah hybrids.**

Students have the opportunity to
see first-hand A1 Savannah
facilities, enrichments, nutri-
tional regime, and breeding
programs.

Course host is Kathrin Stucki of
A1 Savannahs, e-mail questions to:
A1savannahs@yahoo.com
call: 603-944-5047

Nearby Airports:
Wichita (ICT) 90 miles
Tulsa (TUL) 100 miles
Oklahoma City (OKC) 114 miles

**Registration form - please cut out or photocopy and mail with
payment check to: A1 Savannahs 7750 W. Riverview Road,
Ponca City, OK 74601**

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City _____

State _____ **Zip** _____

Phone : _____

E-Mail _____

Attending the Sunday tour of A1 Savannahs () yes () no

Total enclosed _____

Blast from the Past. . . . But It Wasn't Really an Escape...

**L.I.O.C. Endangered Species Conservation Federation
Nov/Dec 1997—Volume 41, Issue 6**

By Carole Lewis

After all the hoopla following the Zoo Inquiry, (it never rains, it pours so they say), and five years with no escapes from our compound, we awoke to find our electronic front gate standing wide open and the door ripped off the cat yard with the lock still in place.

The two cougars who resided there were three years old, bottle-raised pets. The male came looking for us and was returned to his cage within minutes after we discovered him missing. We had recently banned a volunteer from the compound after he was seen kicking the female cougar (which was now at large) and fired a housekeeper for theft. We didn't notice that a gate remote opener was missing. (Those things are like TV remote controls and socks—they disappear and reappear at will, it seems.) The volunteer had been threatening to sue us for the past few months (he said the cat bit him after he kicked her) if we didn't give him and the fired housekeeper several of our animals. To date he hasn't found an attorney to take the case. We wondered if this

was an attempt on his part to make the female cougar look like a menace to society.

We called our neighbors to let them know one of our cats was at large and we called the Animal Control Department and Fish & Game. My brother is a deputy sheriff, so he was on the lookout there. We expected people would call in Florida panther sightings if she did leave the yard and we wanted everyone to know that she was a tame pet and not to shoot her.

Five local television channels and two newspapers descended like vultures. The news stations had a helicopter circling overhead at very low altitude for hours until my 16-year-old daughter called the station and threatened to shoot it out of the air if they didn't stop frightening the animals. Apparently all of the noise and bands of vehicles scared the

cat further away from our facility. In all of the "escapes" we have ever had, the animals never left the property and we spent the entire day looking under every leaf on the 40 acres.

When something like this happens it hurts us all...All they will remember is that some fancy sounding group said people shouldn't own exotics and that one escaped.

We never considered looking down the road. It was almost midnight when the sheriff called and said the cat had been seen at the end of our dirt road at the Circle K convenience store. My husband and I grabbed a snare pole and raced to the scene. The second time Don called to her she ran right up to him and buried her head in his embrace. I thought I

was going to cry.

Because of all the flashing lights, news crews, flashlights and people screaming that she was caught, we put the snare on her and held her tail to keep her from flipping around. We loaded her into the car and drove the half-mile home with a police escort of some six squad cars. She ate as if she had been gone a week. The attention this whole episode brought was on the scale of a papal visit but all bad. The media was now misquoting the phony report of the WSPA and saying that the cats had escaped because of the abuse they had been forced to endure here. Every time something was said it was exaggerated more. People were stopping me on the street and asking if we had caught the 800 pound tiger yet. We were issued a citation and given a court date and told that we could receive a \$500 fine or six months in jail for the escape.

When something like this happens it hurts us all. The vast majority of people will not know what the facts were. All they will remember is that some fancy sounding group said people shouldn't own exotics and that one escaped. When bills are presented to ban exotic ownership, the general public is not going to realize the devastating consequences for the species involved. Hindsight is always 20/20. We have since thought of countless ways this could have been prevented (includ-



ing having quietly fed the offending parties to the cats), but it won't change things now.

The purpose of this is to share with you how easily something like this can happen and urge all of you to go to extreme measures to prevent such mishaps—you really can't do too much. The lives of countless animals depend on us.

It is ironic however that the public, wanting to witness all this "abuse" poured in the gates by the truckload. Our volunteers and staff were hard-pressed to keep up with the requests for tours—the appointment book was overflowing. After seeing for themselves what our refuge is all about, donations were four times higher than ever and some even took time to write the papers and take them to task for their inaccurate reporting. Of course, it wasn't so much inaccurate as one-sided, the media having regurgitated the WSPA story without checking the facts for themselves. I guess that was the silver lining, if there was such a thing. You can meet most of our "residents" and visit WildLife on Easy Street on the web. •

Carole Lewis, now Carole Baskin, is an avid exotic cat collector. Carole and her husband Don, founded Wildlife on Easy Street, an exotic cat breeding and brokering business with over 100 cats. Operating today as Big Cat Rescue, she campaigns against all forms of private ownership.

Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program

The FCF board of directors congratulate the following individuals have made application for and been accepted into the Registered Exotic Feline Handler Program the past two months.

Liz Hatton - Basic
Melissa Meadows - Advanced
John Erickson - Basic
Jill Galindo - Intermediate
Della Jacott - Basic
Kyla Patterson - Basic
Kasi Womack - Basic
Linda Koch - Basic
Zuzana Kukol - Advanced
Doc Antle - Advanced
Scott Shoemaker - Intermediate

FCF provides input to legislators and regulatory agencies that make decisions that affect ownership, breeding, or exhibiting of cats. Registration of more members increases the weight and authority of our comments.

A new online handler registration form can be filled out directly in the members only section of the FCF web site and the \$30.00 registration fee can be made through PayPal. Additionally, when making updates, you can view your previous experience and add new experiences to build your handler experience file.

The registration remains active as long as you are an FCF member.

The board further challenges these experienced handlers who maintain facilities to apply for the FCF Facility Accreditation. The overview, basic standards, and Accreditation application can also be found on the FCF members-only website.

Congratulations to all of these members for their dedication to their cats.

Joe Fortunato
FCF Secretary

FUZZY PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

AT ROMAN NOSE STATE PARK

WATONGA, OK



OCT 22 THRU OCT 26, 2009

WWW.OKLACON.COM

Free Food—from 30

lic's needs, so product can vary from 200 to as much as 600 pounds weekly. The product contains retail cuts of beef, pork, lamb, seafood, poultry, processed meat, and specialty meats.

It should be noted that not all meat will be suitable to feed felines. There will be some need to sort through it and to properly discard inappropriate items in accordance with local ordinances.

This program is not completely free; Sustainable Selections has a monthly fee that goes toward administrative and insurance costs. Participants must purchase heavy-duty Rubbermaid 44-gallon receptacles that are replaced at pick-up.

Because of the amount of weekly product being discarded at each location,

facilities housing just a few carnivores will need to find others to pool together to share the resource. But if smaller facilities are in contact with larger ones, cooperative distribution arrangements can be arranged.

As the program grows, other lines of animal feeds are promised. "In addition to providing meat and produce, Sustainable Selections is looking to add grain and dried-food options in the near future," said Sweere.

For more information and to find out what options are available to you, please email robins@questrecycling.com or visit www.landfilldiversioninnovations.com

—Jason Smith, Marketing Director
972-464-0004 x207

Minutes of FCF Board Meeting of July 23, 2009, Salinas, CA

The meeting was called to order by president Kevin Chambers. Present were Lynn Culver, Kevin Chambers, Rob Johnson, Kurt Beckelman, Joe Fortunato, Ron DeArmond, Pat Callahan, and Patti Perry.

The treasurer, Kurt Beckelman, gave a treasurer's report. At the end of the second quarter of 2009, the FCF total income was \$34,868.06, total expenses were \$32,580.67, and total assets are \$90,052.71.

Rob Johnson moved to ratify the vote to approve minutes from the May 15-24 Internet board meeting. Ron DeArmond seconded. Motion carried.

Ron DeArmond moved to appoint Mike Friese as editor of the FCF Journal. Kurt Beckelman seconded. Motion carried.

A motion was made to appoint Kate Conner Kahn as convention chairman. Motion carried.

Ron DeArmond moved to re-appoint accreditation committee member, Doc Antle, and appoint Ron Young to replace Kevin Chambers on that committee. Rob Johnson seconded. Motion carried.

Kurt Beckelman moved to approve the Conservation Grants Committee's recommendation for conservation grants. Patti Perry seconded. Motion carried. The recommendations were to grant Cat Conservation Trust \$1,200 for a multimedia projector for educational programs on Predator Conservation Education in South Africa, (see related article published in Volume 52, Issue 6) and \$1,400 to Javiar Pereira for research on Geoffroy's cat demography,



health, genetics, and ecological flexibility in Argentina. (See related article published in Volume 53, Issue 4.) It was discussed that we might be able to purchase a multimedia projector in the USA and have Robert Johnson deliver it when he is in South Africa later this year.

Patti Perry motioned to have Jim Sanderson's FCF conference registration reimbursed. Ron seconded. Motion carried.

Jim Sanderson had presented a suggestion that FCF compile a photo library on the FCF web site for people and journalists to use free of charge. FCF members will be asked to send in photos for the cat photography library. Lynn Culver will contact the webmaster Chuck to work out details of how to best compile and upload this photo

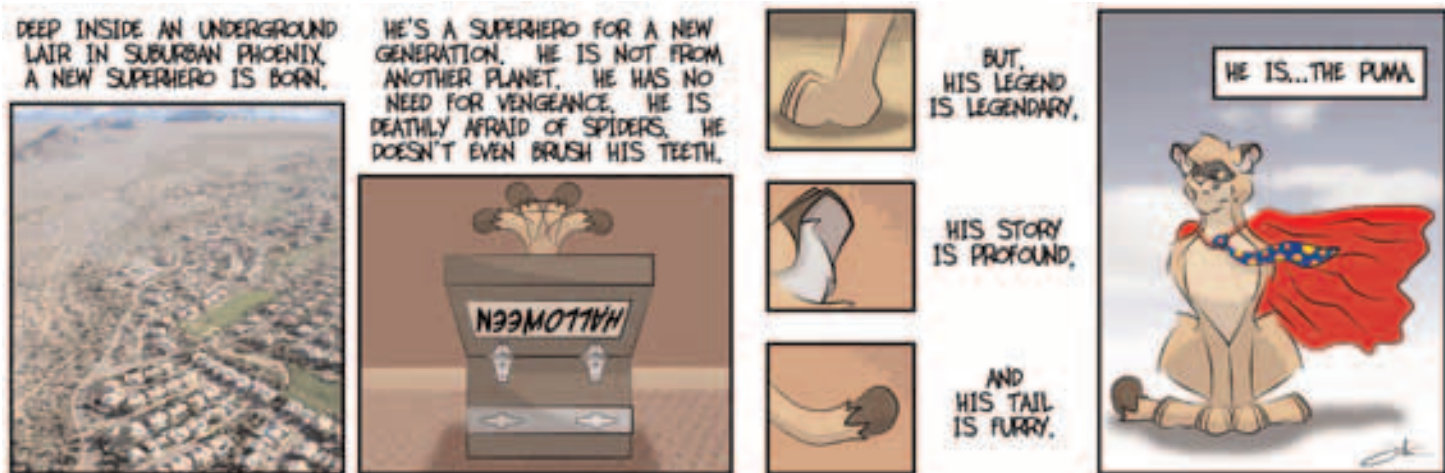
resource.

Discussion of having the option of receiving the FCF Journal electronically instead of mailing printed journals was brought up. The FCF journal is mailed using a bulk mail permit that keeps postage down, and receives a volume printing discount. It was noted that if we reduce the number of journals printed and mailed, it will increase per-issue costs and overall savings might not be justified. Past journal issues are posted on the members only site for those who would like to read it online. No action was taken.

Patti Perry volunteered to attend the Wildlife Conservation Network Expo in San Jose, CA on October 3, 2009, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Caroline Alexander will be

SANDUSKY

by John Prengaman



attending with other FCF member volunteers to man an exhibit booth for FCF.

Discussion about being more discretionary in printing of photos in the FCF journal was addressed. The discussion stems from a few members who have expressed concern over some journal photos showing people in dangerous situations with cats. Some members of the board agreed that publishing these kinds of photos in the journal sends the wrong message and noted it is against what is taught in the husbandry and educators courses. The board agreed that the journal photo policy should

emphasize safety and the correct way of handling exotic felines. One suggestion was to include captions, or a disclaimer, when appropriate, indicating that interactions depicted are by trained professionals.

Discussion concerning the registered handler program qualifications, forms, and ways to improve the application process produced suggestions including: having a checklist as part of the form and being more specific as to breeding, exhibition, transporting, and educational programs. Time required and minimum age was also discussed, as was changing the classification

categories. The board approved by consensus the following change: Basic Handler registration will begin at one year, instead of two years experience and cover up to four years of experience. A new category called Intermediate Handlers will register 5-9 years of experience. Advanced Handlers will continue to register 10 or more years of experience. The board discussed whether to make registrations viewable to members to enable them to search for mentors. Joe and Lynn will work together to create changes to the form and present this work to the board in the future.

Rob Johnson will be working with the executive director on a proactive video in support of private captive habitat and the conservation value of captive gene pools. Anyone with ideas should email them to Rob.

Kurt Beckelman moved to have FCF board members, including the executive director, and those required attending meetings, i.e. chairman of convention, reimbursed up to \$400 for travel expenses to the convention, to be covered by a \$5.00 increase in membership dues, effective December 1, 2009. Joe Fortunato seconded. 6 yes, 1 no vote, motion carried. Later Kurt Beckelman moved and Robert Johnson seconded to rescind this motion. 7 yes, 0 no, motion passes.

Potential locations for the 2010 convention include St. Louis, Chicago, and Oklahoma City. A poll of the members at the general membership meeting will be taken to determine their preference.

Discussion was held on the need to form an administrative staff to help with some of the duties of the board. •

Donations

The FCF membership and the board of directors wish to offer a special thanks to the following individuals who have made donations to various projects over the past few months. These donations make it possible for the FCF to provide additional funding for special projects, fight negative legislation, and support conservation projects which we might not be able to fund as fully in our annual budget.

We thank these contributors for their special effort and encourage others to follow their example by helping to provide extra funding for those projects that are of special interest to each individual.

Project: Andean cat

Elizabeth Hatton
Connie Riehl
George DeLong
Ron Kooienga
Mary Lowe
Carl Mogensen/
Natural Bridge Zoo
Robert Moyes
Thierry Plaud
Amund Bjorklund
Fred Boyajian
Charlie Sammut/
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Dolly Guck
Laura Walker
Laurel Inn/
Terry Sammut

General Fund

Alexander Pardo

Convention Donation

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Dr. Martin Dinnes

Feline Transport Fund

Bob Aufill
Angela Anderson
Barry Smith

The FCF appreciates your generosity and continued support.

Joseph Fortunato
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IBERIAN LYNX
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Like the other three lynx species, the IBERIAN LYNX relies heavily on the availability of rabbits, his main food source. Small pockets of isolated woodlands and mountainous scrub in southern Spain support the remaining fragmented population of this 9 - 13 kg (20 - 29 lb) endangered wildcat.

Rochelle Mason raises awareness about endangered species through her paintings, columns, and traveling exhibits. Her wildcat paintings and prints are sold through www.Rmasonfinearts.com



Scenes from the convention

Clockwise from top: Charlie Sammut's cougar cub, Cosmo—Melissa Faust • It's not pink so we haven't had too many drinks...it's Butch the elephant—Bill Meadows • Jill Galindo's kitten, Scooter, one of three Geoffroy's at the convention—Melissa Faust • Christine Llewelyn from Vision Quest Ranch stretches Nadia, a Siberian Lynx. Nadia was a gift from Doc Antle to Charlie Sammut—Robert Hohn.

Your best Shot





Hollywood animal trainer Charlie Sammut demonstrates for the FCF how he shapes behaviors by rewarding Jacob the lion for standing on his mark. Read *Animal Training ~ Science + Experience = Recipe*, inside this Journal to learn more about Charlie's philosophy on professional animal training.

FCF Upcoming Events

FCF Feline Husbandry Course, Saturday, October 3, 2009

FCF Wild/Exotic Feline Husbandry Course in Ponca City, Oklahoma, from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Course location is Holiday Inn Express, 2809 North 14th Street, Ponca City, OK. Call 580-762-3700 to reserve a room. Registration fee is \$95 for FCF members, \$130 for non-members. Mail contact info and payment to course host: A1 Savannahs c/o Kathrin Stucki, 7750 W. Riverview Rd. Ponca City, OK 74601. You may also register on the FCF web site and pay with PayPal.

Tour, Sunday, October 4, 2009 Husbandry course students are invited to tour A1 Savannahs in Ponca City, OK at 9:00am.

Outreach, Saturday, October 3, 2009 The Feline Conservation Federation will set up a booth at the Wildlife Conservation Expo Day at the Mission Bay Conference Center in San Francisco, CA. 10:00am-6:00pm. Special keynote speaker: Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE. Meet conservation heroes, visit conservation exhibits, and purchase wildlife art and crafts. Admission: \$60, students with ID \$30. Caroline Alexander is coordinating the FCF booth. Need FCF members to assist. Contact Caroline at 510-304-0031 or email her at cello33dolly@yahoo.com

