



The mission of the Zoological Society is to support the Milwaukee County Zoo, to educate people about the importance of wildlife and the environment, and to take part in conserving wildlife and endangered species.

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President's Letter



It was sometime the first week of May when my wife, Lillian, and I saw the first grosbeaks and orioles of the season, birds we hadn't seen since fall. We get excited when these signals of spring return to our property and feel proud of what the Zoological Society is doing to learn more about migratory birds through our Birds Without Borders-Aves Sin FronterasSM program. This May, through its Migratory Bird Day celebration, the Milwaukee County Zoo also helped raise awareness of the integral part migratory birds play in our lives.

To me, the return of these birds also is a reminder of the busy summer season ahead at the Zoo. This summer, we are thrilled to present to our members and to the public two exhibits that take you through the world of the Maya: Ameritech's Butterflies! Living Jewels of the Mundo MayaSM and Temple Monkeys of Tikal. We are grateful to Ameritech for its major support of the butterfly exhibit, created and built for the Zoo by the Zoological Society. This spectacular exhibit will immerse you in a tropical "rain forest" filled with "ruins" of mysterious Maya structures and hundreds of brilliant Central American butterflies.

We also are grateful to our members and the Krause Family Foundation for their generous contributions toward the newly renovated and expanded spider monkey exhibit, Temple Monkeys of Tikal. This exhibit, featuring ruins of the Maya city of Tikal, Guatemala, is part of a commitment that the Society made to the Zoo in the mid-'90s to spend a quarter-million dollars upgrading or adding a permanent Zoo exhibit each year. While we are well on our way to financing the \$340,000 cost of this exhibit, we still need about \$60,000 to reach our goal. If every member who hasn't yet donated to our annual appeal mailed us \$2, we would meet our goal.

Most of all, thank you for your membership. I remind you and your family to use your Zoo Pass often this summer. We have an outstanding season of family fun waiting for you.

Gil Boese, Ph.D., President
Zoological Society of Milwaukee County



Alive

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 3

features

- 4 **Jewels of the Mundo Maya**
Let the Zoo transport you to the world of the mysterious Maya and the ruins of their forest cities filled with living gems: colorful butterflies. Stroll through an indoor rain forest in Ameritech's Butterflies! Living Jewels of the Mundo MayaSM through Sept. 30.
- 6 **Animal Art Exhibit Winners!**
Endangered species get a boost from student artists in our annual contest.
- 8 **Peaceable Rattler**
Three researchers map the plight of the timber rattlesnake, and a Wisconsin company is a model for learning to live alongside the snakes.
- 10 **Habitat 2000**
Kids will have an extra fun time at the Zoo Aug. 17-30 when they ogle eight kid-size playhouses on display around the grounds. If they buy a raffle ticket from the Zoological Society, they might even win one of the themed playhouses. Sponsored by Northwestern Mutual Foundation, this fund-raising event for the Society is called Habitat 2000.
- 15 **Monkeys in Maya Ruins**
Continuing the Maya theme of our butterfly exhibit (above), a new permanent exhibit premieres this month: Temple Monkeys of Tikal. Funded by our Annual Appeal and the Krause Family Foundation, this spider-monkey exhibit features "ruins" from Tikal, an ancient Maya city in Guatemala.
- 16 **Bark if You Love Prairie Dogs**
Welcome the Zoo's new denizens and find your other favorite animals that have new exhibits.

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Prairie Dogs



Notice some brilliant splashes of color in the Primates of the World and Aquatic & Reptile Center animal exhibits? They're ofChids! The otchid idea came from Zookeepers Trish Khan (shown here feeding golden lion tamarins) and Jenn Kawalsky.



JEWELS OF THE MUNDO MAYA

BY PAULA BROOKMIRE

They were here thousands of years before Columbus discovered America. They created cities and art that rivaled those in Greece, pyramids and an astronomy that rivaled those in Egypt, and a life-or-death ball game that rivaled the battles of Roman gladiators.

They were the Maya. Their ancestors and the ruins of Maya cities are scattered throughout Central America. Researchers discover more of their art and translate more of their hieroglyphic language every year. Now you can take a walk through their world at the Milwaukee County Zoo, thanks to a new summer exhibit created by the Zoological Society and running through Sept. 30.

In Ameritech's Butterflies! Living Jewels of the Mundo Maya™, you catch your first glimpse of the Maya as you walk through a Belizean cave and see a hieroglyph on the wall. Leaving the cave, you enter a tropical "rain forest" filled with towering ruins of mysterious Maya structures: a half-buried pyramid, a 15-foot-high "stone" wall with a giant head sculpture, a dramatic entrance to a temple. Live butterflies fly around a waterfall and hover at feeding areas. Sounds of the rain forest place you in the Tropics.

The surroundings transport you to the warm, lush and misty world of exotic butterflies. These vibrant creatures love colors (especially reds, pinks and purples) and will land on you if you stay very still and avoid wearing insect repellent.

A Zoological Society-produced field guide introduces you to the Maya and helps you identify 21

of the 40 varieties of butterflies that are in the exhibit. The Maya theme greets you on entering the Otto Borchert Family Special Exhibits Building, where the exhibit is housed. Authentic Maya music from Belize plays in the area before you enter the forest.

"Butterflies" is the first large exhibit that the Zoological Society of Milwaukee has created and built for the Zoo. This major investment involved expanding a butterfly farm in the Central American country of Belize, where the butterflies are raised, then transporting them in pupa stage to Milwaukee. They hatch in the exhibit – right in front of you. Hundreds of live plants grown just for this exhibit and more than 300 artificial plants create the indoor forest.

ACME Corp. Production Services of Milwaukee designed and built the exhibit, with simulated Maya ruins, a waterfall, and an entry cave. "We're not duplicating a Maya

ruin. We're creating the Maya experience," said Mark Miskimen, ACME president. "It's not laid out the way Maya ruins are, but when you walk in, you feel that it's the Maya world."

The design is based partly on photos taken by Dr. Gil Boese, Zoological Society president, who has been photographing and exploring Maya ruins and caves since 1986. "Most of the Maya temples are overgrown with forest, and they are a good place to see butterflies," says Boese. That was the inspiration for combining butterflies and Maya ruins in this exhibit. "It represents a walk in the rain forest."



Julie Hoffmeister and son Kyle, 8, of Wauwatosa, Wis., attract the zuleika and zebra butterflies during a recent visit to Ameritech's Butterflies! Living Jewels of the Mundo Maya, open through Sept. 30 at the Zoo.



Biologist Jan Meerman of Belize, the Society's field expert and consultant for the butterfly exhibit, notes:

"Male butterflies seek out elevated areas in a flat landscape and thus fly around the top of Maya temples above the forest canopy, waiting for the females to find them." So the ruins represent a mating place for butterflies.

Meerman and his wife, Tineke Boomsma, raise butterflies for the Zoo's exhibit on their Green Hills Butterfly Ranch and Botanical Gardens in Belize. Meerman studies butterflies and soon will publish a book called *Butterflies of Belize*. Many of his photos illustrate the exhibit's field guide. Because different species of butterflies breed and emerge at different times, all 40 species slated for the exhibit will not be there at the same time, he notes. Generally, there will be 15 to 20 species in the exhibit at any one time.

Boese has worked with the Maya Indians in Belize to help promote understanding of their history and culture. The exhibit is even named for the Mundo Maya™ concept, which is to bring all Central American

countries of the Maya world together to promote tourism and conservation. The phrase *mundo Maya*

means world of the Maya. Ruins of the famous Maya city of Tikal in Guatemala are featured in the Zoo's Temple Monkeys of Tikal, a permanent exhibit that opens July 15 (see story on page 15).

In addition to live butterflies and npna hatcheries inside the rain forest, the exhibit includes several huge

Dinamation® robotic butterflies and information about butterflies at the entrance and exit of the rain forest.

If this exhibit piques your interest in the Maya, check out the 1993 National Geographic video "Lost Kingdoms of the Maya" or search the Internet for Maya, and you'll find many Web sites, such as www.mayadiscovery.com. For more information about butterflies, check such Web sites as: www.mesc.usgs.gov/butterfly/butterfly.html. Or, check with Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops for a recommended list of books, such as *Butterflies* by Roger Peterson. 🐾



Building the butterfly exhibit's "ruins"; Richard Nebel of ACME Corp. finishes painting a Belizean "cave" with a Maya glyph on the wall.



Waiting for weathering touches is the entrance to a Maya temple.



Biologist and botanist Jan Meerman manges plants to produce more flowers, which then will yield more nectar for the butterflies. When the butterflies can't find nectar from the live plants, they stop at feeding stations like the one pictured here for artificial nectar. Meerman runs Green Hills Butterfly Ranch in Belize, Central America, where the pupae for the Zoo's butterfly exhibit originated.

Endangered species drew the attention of shoppers at Wauwatosa's Mayfair Mall April 28-May 15, 2000, when high-school and college students displayed their animal art as part of the Zoological Society's Sixth Annual Animal People's Choice Art Competition, sponsored by the Robert K. & Joyce R. Cope Foundation. The exhibition was a selection of 93 of the best entries, picked by five Milwaukee-area art professionals. The public then voted for People's Choice winners. The jury also picked two of its favorites. The winners are pictured here. Each of the top six students – three high-school, three college – won \$100 and received a Zoological Society membership, which includes a year's free admission to the Milwaukee County Zoo. Winners of the jurors' choice awards won \$50 each.

Winners of honorable mention are Anne Collins, Divine Savior Holy Angels, for her clay elephant sculpture; Sara Pekul, Elkhorn Area High School, for her colored-pencil illustration of cats; Marie Haas, Mount Mary College, for her digital snow leopard photo; Victor Garza, Wisconsin Lutheran College, for his conté crayon drawing of a tiger. All honorable-mention winners received \$50 gift certificates to Milwaukee's Artist and Display art-supplies store.

ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

- 164 students entered (36 college, 128 high school)
- 93 artworks were exhibited (17 college, 76 high school)



sixth ANNUAL ANIMAL

PEOPLE'S CHOICE ART COMPETITION



JURORS' CHOICE
PEOPLE'S CHOICE
Chimpanzee, ebony pencil, by Gina Bequest of Slinger, from Slinger High School



PEOPLE'S CHOICE
Lonely are the Few, ebony pencil, by Eddie Platz of Watertown, from Watertown High School

JURORS' CHOICE
Rhino-shoe-us, wood and leather shoes, by Annika Paulbeck of Germantown, from Germantown High School



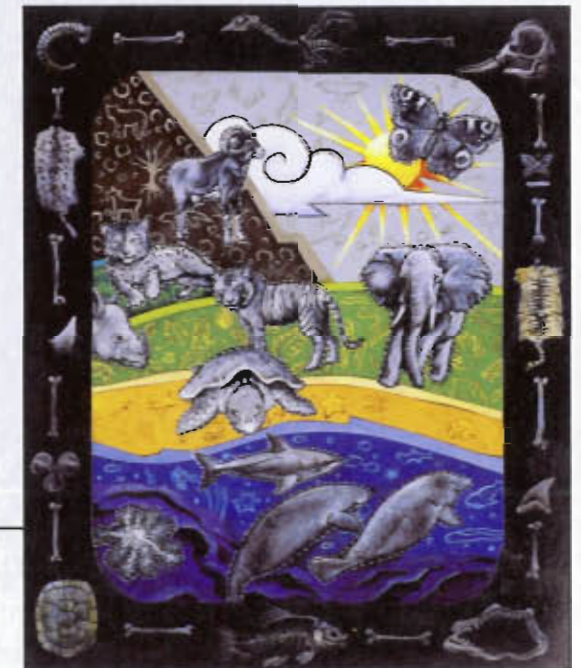
PEOPLE'S CHOICE
Untitled, acrylic painting, by Timothy Voiles of West Allis, from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



PEOPLE'S CHOICE
Monarch Migration, batik/mixed media, by Leah Mohar of Sheboygan, from Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design



PEOPLE'S CHOICE
Serenity, oil painting, by Amy Welch of Waukesha, from Waukesha South High School



PEOPLE'S CHOICE
Untitled, acrylic painting, by Kristin Rauwerdink of Malone, Wis., from Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design

Peaceable Rattler

BY FRAN BAUER

Does this sound like "Mission Impossible?" Your mission is to teach people the value of rattlesnakes and help them get over their fear of the reptiles?

Yet that is exactly what three rattlesnake experts are doing. Thanks in part to their efforts – and a study financed by the Zoological Society and co-sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources and Milwaukee County Zoo – we are learning more about timber rattlesnakes. People are starting to understand why these endangered snakes are important to the environment (to keep down rodents) and to humans (snake venom can help treat illnesses like cancer, stroke and heart attack). They're beginning to learn what scientists have known for decades: that snakes are docile. [One of the world's great naturalists, George Shaw, wrote in 1802 about the peaceable nature of the timber rattlesnake.] One Wisconsin company even has a facility above a rattler den.

"There is an irrational fear about snakes. When people have experience with the snakes, they still may not like



them, but at least they don't fear them," says Rich Sajdak, a former Milwaukee County Zoo curator.

Sajdak has joined forces with Craig Berg, the Zoo's aquarium/reptile curator, and Bob Hay of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. They have planted tiny transmitters in the bodies of several snakes to monitor the snakes' body temperatures, their movements and how far they roam in search of food. They are all involved in a three-year, Zoological Society-supported study of how rattlesnakes live and reproduce. They hope to pinpoint how long it takes females to give birth to their clutches of six to 12 baby snakes, as well as other behavior patterns that will be key to helping the snakes survive.

Years ago, 40 to 50 snakes could be found in a den. Now Sajdak sees no more than four snakes in a single day. Timber

rattlesnakes are losing their habitats. Native to southwestern Wisconsin, these snakes den in rocky bluffs above rivers – places now popular as new-home sites. Fields where snakes once warmed their bodies to a high enough temperature to bear young are being taken over by more wooded areas. More trees mean more snake predators: raccoons, possums and skunks.

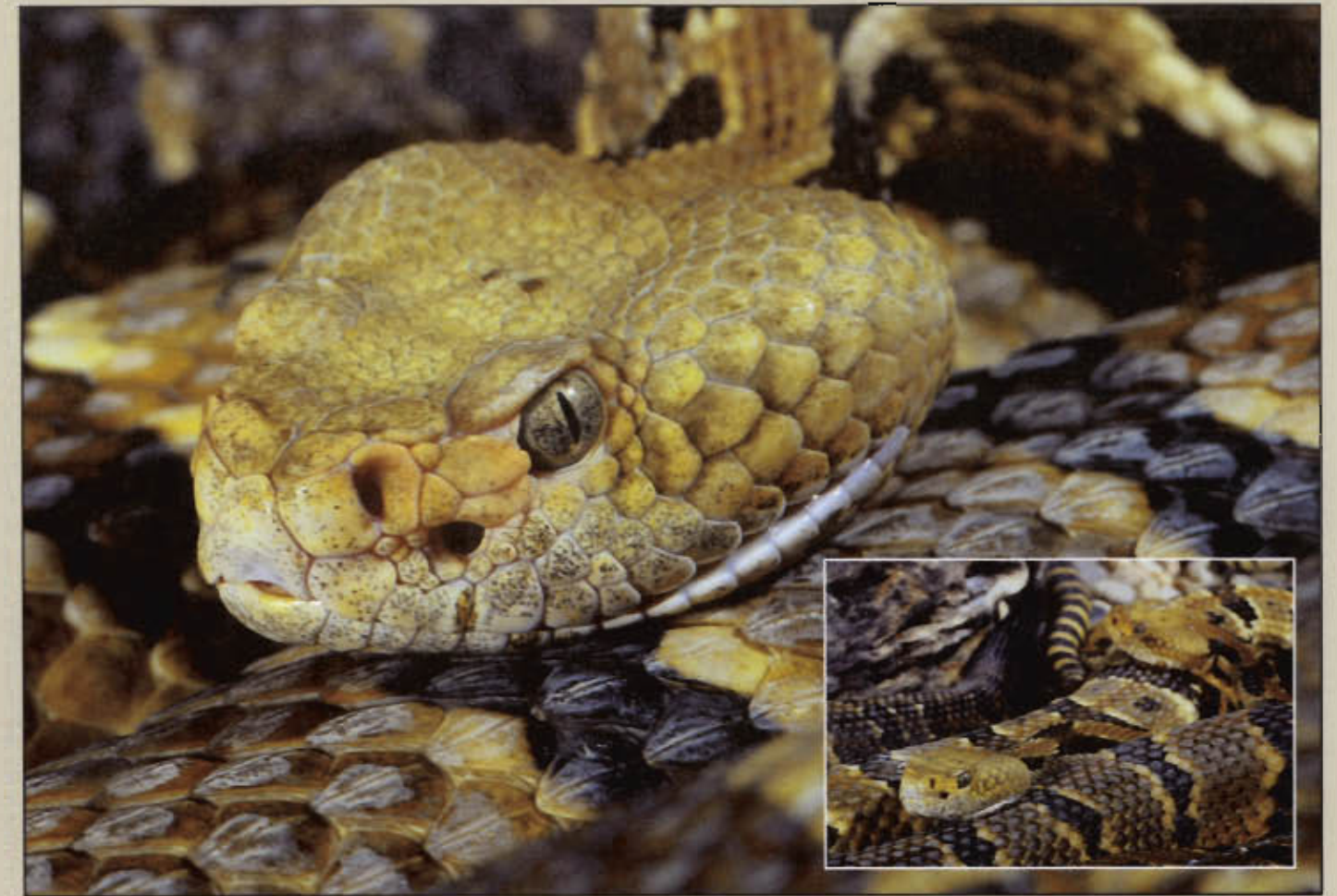
Also, illegal hunting for pet snakes, snakeskins, rattles, and snakeheads for decoration takes a toll. [Until 1975, the state paid a bounty for killing rattlesnakes. Only recently did timber rattlers become an officially protected species.]

Education is the real key to the snakes' survival, Sajdak said.

Take the example of Phillips Plastics Company, which unwittingly created a perfect habitat for rattlesnakes when it built one of its facilities on a river bluff in southwestern Wisconsin in 1988. Employees came to work and discovered rattlers sunning themselves in the parking lot or crawling along the edge of the building in search of mice. No one was ever bitten by the snakes, and over the years employees came to accept them. Then Phillips hit a growth spurt, more than doubling the size of its staff. The newcomers were wary of the snakes.

Paul Johnson, who joined the firm in 1995 as its maintenance coordinator, called the DNR's Bob Hay, who supervises cold-blooded species for the Bureau of Endangered Species. Hay's first suggestion was to move the snakes to another location. Then he toured the 38-acre site and saw what great snake habitat it was. The company had used bedrock from the excavated building site to enclose its parking lots and slow rainwater run-off. It had built a retaining wall to contain the side of a hill. The snakes could warm themselves on the asphalt parking lots, then slip away into the rocky crevasses.

Hay offered to teach employees about the plight of the rattlesnake. Phillips and its employees were amazingly receptive, he said. Hay showed a video on how docile snakes are unless provoked, explained that



there has been only one human death recorded from a timber rattler bite in the state since 1900, and he brought in live snakes.

"People who had perceived that the snakes were dangerous realized that they really are not," Johnson said. "What helped us the most was having our employees learn that, rather than the snakes being an enemy, we could live alongside them." The key? Avoid the snakes and don't startle them, and you're unlikely to have a confrontation.

Phillips employees now sit out on the deck during breaks and watch for snakes. It can be a highlight of the day.

Hay offers the same educational workshops to line crews who clear away undergrowth beneath power lines for energy companies. And he plans to reach rural landowners with the same message. "I'm hoping, by showing them the reality of the threat, that they'll be able to put their fear of snakes in perspective," he said.

Even as attitudes about the snake change, Hay knows that the rattlesnake's


future is grim. Not enough is known about why the snakes are continuing to die out.

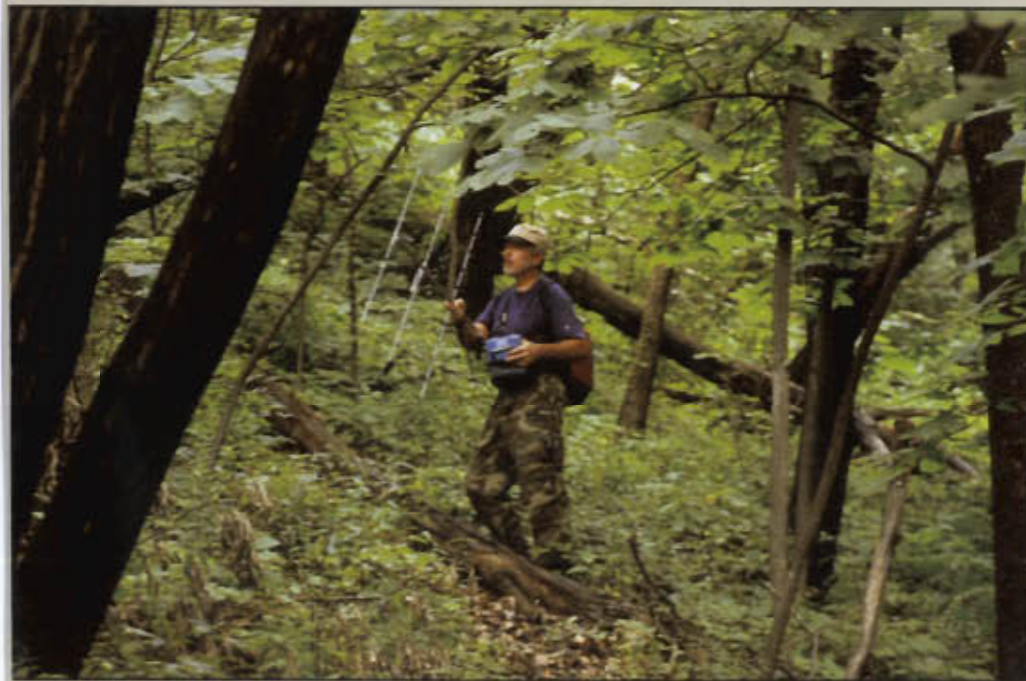
"We know that rattlesnakes can live for 25 years, though we don't know how many actually do," Hay said. "Today, the species is dominated by large, older snakes. The younger females remain very vulnerable. We'd thought when the bounty ended in 1975, that females would breed every three to four years. But their recovery as a species remains low." Though females may give birth to 15 to 20 babies in their lifetime, few baby rattlesnakes appear to survive.

So far, the study has raised more questions than answers, said Berg. Last winter, Berg went out once a month to check on a snake den 600 feet above the Mississippi River, to record any movements plus the body temperatures of the snakes sleeping in hibernation below. He was watching when the first snake emerged in early April, despite the snow still on the ground. He tracked changes in their body temperatures, recording the information relayed by radio transmitters.

"We know that the timber rattlesnake needs a number of different habitats to survive," he said. "For example, the females must be warm all summer if they are to give birth in August and September. Then they need to forage in wooded areas that have a lot of rodents." Given Wisconsin's cool climate, the snakes can be active and feed only from May to September.

Do changes in rodent populations impact snake populations? How will climate change affect the snakes? How old are snakes when they first give birth? How often do females reproduce in Wisconsin? We don't know, said Berg.

"The snakes are being hit from all sides," he added. "That's why this study is so important. We need to know how to protect their habitat if we are to protect the timber rattlesnake as part of our natural heritage." 



Antenna in hand, researcher Rich Sajdak follows a radio signal to pinpoint the location of a timber rattlesnake in the field. Without radio tracking equipment, finding a specific timber rattlesnake in the wild would be nearly impossible.



HABITAT 2000
Zoological Society Playhouse Raffle



The Habitat 2000 playhouses and their builders:

An African thatched-roof hut with reed and bamboo walls by B & E General Contractors, Inc.

"Lake Evinrude Lighthouse" by Building Services Inc.

"Aussie Outpost" by Peter Schwabe, Inc. Design/Build

"Feline Mall – a Game of Hide-n-Seek" by T-3 Group, Ltd.

A shipwrecked boat with sandbox by C.G. Schmidt

Red Fire Engine House by Trustway Homes

"Wilderness Wolf Lodge" by Schubring Builders, LLC

"Temple of Tika" – a sturdy climbing playhouse of recycled plastic by Playworks, Inc.

Brian Schubring of Schubring Builders and his 2½-year-old daughter, Rachel, work on the porch of Wilderness Wolf Lodge playhouse. On the roof is Todd Dybedahl.

BY SANDRA WHITEHEAD

When Kathy Kemnitz heard her friend's sister won a unique playhouse recently in a fund-raiser in Illinois, she wished someone around here would give her a chance at one.

"It would be different from anything else my children already have," said the Zoological Society member and Brookfield mother of three. "It would encourage them and their friends to imagine, to make up stories and games. It would be so much fun."

When she heard the Zoological Society of Milwaukee County would be raffling off eight one-of-a-kind, architect-designed playhouses (some influenced by animal habitats) and created by some of the Milwaukee area's top builders, she

pictured her children – Jack, 5; Mick, 3; and Katy, 1 – pouncing and swinging in their own back yard.


She'll have her chance to win in a drawing Aug. 30. Raffle tickets go on sale Aug. 17, the first day of Milwaukee Journal Sentinel A la Carte, for \$3 each or \$5 for two.

Bunny Raasch Hooten, a Zoological Society Associate Board member, suggested the playhouse raffle after hearing about similar fund-raisers in Seattle, Orlando and Newport Beach. However, the other fund-raisers were auctions. "We thought it would be more fun for everyone if it was a raffle," says Raasch Hooten.

The Zoological Society aims to raise \$50,000 to support its ongoing conservation and education efforts. "Our Zoo is such an

exciting and rare treasure. This is an opportunity to support the Zoo's wonderful work," says Raasch Hooten. It also "raises awareness of habitats and their importance," says Laura Knollenberg, director of special events for the Zoological Society.

Northwestern Mutual Foundation, FABCO Equipment, Inc., and the builders deserve credit for supporting this fund-raising opportunity, says Raasch Hooten. "So do all the people who help by buying raffle tickets."

"We have one of the best zoos in the world," says Peter Kordus of Building Services, Inc. and a member of the Zoological Society Associate Board. "We want to make sure it has the funds to continue its important work." 

Goat Babies



The Zoo had a baby boom in goats this spring. Thirty-five were born starting in mid-March, including a few twins. "They're cute because they run, jump off things and spring around," says Lisa Guglielmi, a zookeeper in the Zoo's Stackner Heritage Farm. The babies won't be out in the petting yard till late July or August. "It's stressful for the babies to be out in the barn yard because people want to pick them up," says Guglielmi. When children chase them, the babies run and the whole herd follows. Children in the yard could get hurt. Also for safety, the goats' horns were removed in their first week. Baby goats spend most of their time in the barn, nursing and eating timothy hay. When children visit the goat yard, they will find plenty of goats to pet and feed. We now have 109 goats, up from a low point several years ago of 35.



A Tree for Chewy

Remember Chewy, the lovable, huggable baby sloth born three years ago? Chewy, short for Chewbacca, is a common two-toed sloth. In the wild these sloths live in the trees of South American rain forests. Chewy was living in the Small Mammals building at the Milwaukee County Zoo. This summer Chewy has moved outdoors to a special tree in the South American Exhibit. He's in the same yard as several alpacas, two rheas, Fibert the capybara and Harley the Baird's tapir. In another tree across from Chewy you'll find two very noisy but colorful military macaws (parrots). Chewy will go inside if it gets cold (below 60 degrees) or if it rains. This move is an experiment, says zookeeper Bob Hoffmann. Zookeepers want to see if Chewy likes being outdoors with other animals. If not, he may go back to an indoor exhibit. When you visit Chewy, you'll see that sloths move v-e-r-y slowly.

Monkeys, Maya and Morphos

Visit the mysterious world of the May Indians of Central America in two new exhibits at the Zoo this summer. Both exhibits feature animals of Central America: spider monkeys and butterflies. You'll find Maya "ruins" and live butterflies in Ameritech's

Butterflies! Living Jewels of the Mundo MayaSM. Across from Monkey Island, at the Primates of the World Pavilion, you can experience a small part of the huge Maya city of Tikal in the exhibit Temple Monkeys of Tikal.

In the activities on this page, have fun with blue morpho butterflies and monkeys, and learn more about the Maya.



Blue morpho

Butterfly Bagel

Kids, here's a fun treat to make and eat. Have a parent cut the bagel for you and help you find the ingredients. Here's what you will need:

- 1 baby bagel (about 2½ inches in diameter)
- 2 baby carrots
- 2 grapes
- 4 slivers of celery
- 4 tablespoons peanut butter or marshmallow fluff
- 20 miniature M&Ms or 20 raisins



Have an adult slice the whole bagel down the middle into two parts, so that each half has a round hole in it. Then cut each half into "C" shapes; you will have four Cs. Turn the Cs so they look like the picture, forming the wings of your butterfly. You will have 2 butterflies. Place 1 baby carrot between each set of bagel wings. Use peanut butter to "glue" the carrot to the bagel pieces. Use more peanut butter to glue a grape onto each carrot for your butterfly head. With a toothpick, poke 2 tiny holes in the top of each grape. Stick a sliver of celery in each hole; these will be the butterfly's antennae. Finally, spread the rest of the peanut butter over the butterfly wings. Then place 5 M&Ms on each "C" wing to make a pattern. Since you have 2 butterflies, you could make different patterns on each butterfly. If you want to make a blue morpho butterfly, use only blue M&Ms on the wings. Now, eat your treat!

Monkey Quest

A new spider-monkey exhibit opens this month at the Milwaukee County Zoo. Visit Primates of the World and Monkey Island and find out how many other kinds (species) of monkeys live at the Zoo. Write the answer below.



Answer to April 2000 Winged Quest: Congratulations if you found in the Zoo's farm area the two mounted butterflies that hibernate as adults in Wisconsin's winter: Milbert's tortoise-shell and mourning-cloak.

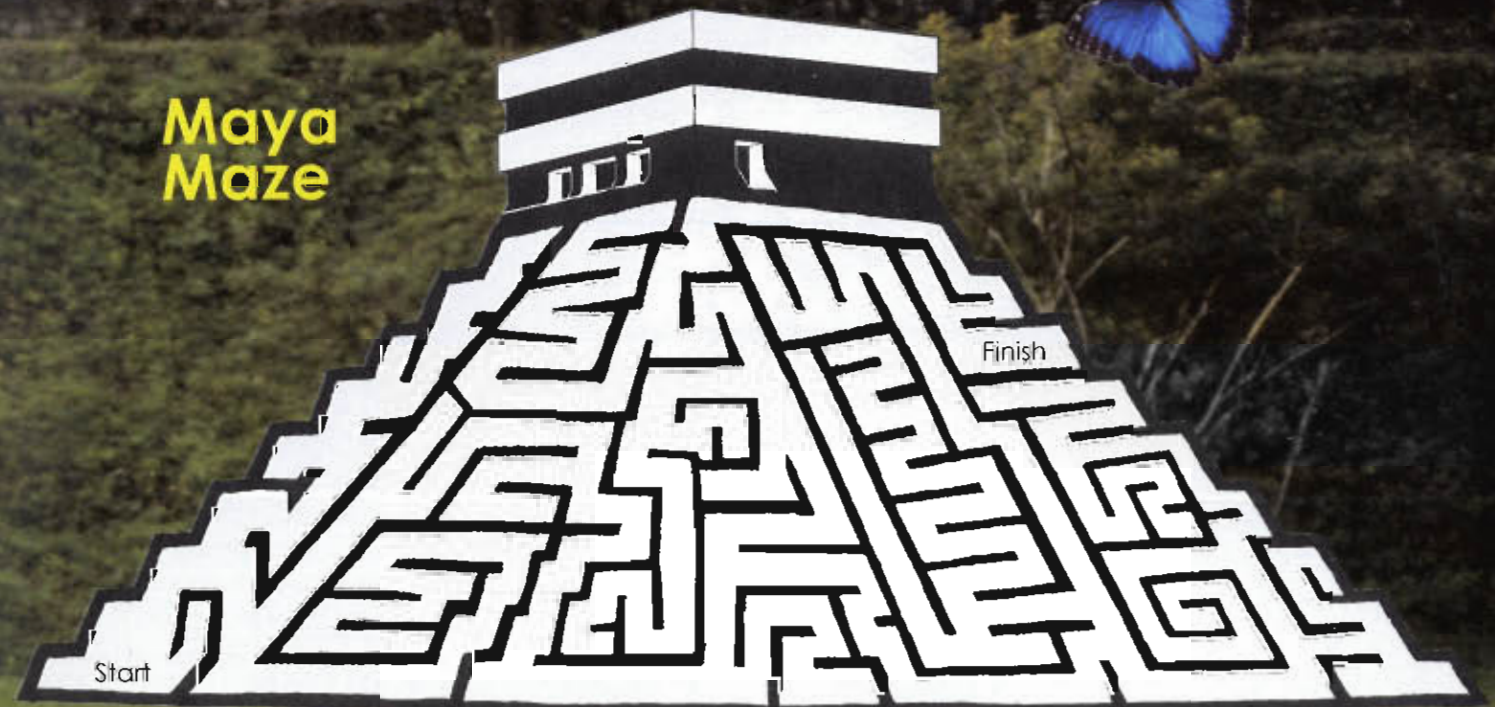
Maya Facts

The Maya people have lived for at least 3,000 years in Central America. Their ancient territories were in the modern-day countries of Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. They built incredible cities miles wide, huge pyramids and palaces, and great sculpture. In the 8th and 9th centuries they abandoned some of their cities because of warfare and because they had used up natural resources. Today the Maya still carry on ancient traditions in such areas as weaving, harvest festivals, and artwork. Here are some Maya facts from the National Geographic Society:

- The ancient Maya loved bright colors and painted their buildings bright reds, blues and greens. Maya today still wear brightly colored clothes.
- Scientists say that American written history began in 200 B.C. with the first written Mayan language.
- The Maya played a ball game like soccer. How they moved the ball was symbolic of the movements of the sun and the moon.
- The Maya were great astronomers and scientists. They could predict eclipses and had a very precise calendar.



Maya Maze





QUESTION: Do giraffes make any sound? What is it like? – Phillip Schroeder, 5, Jackson

Baby giraffes (calves) sometimes make a sound like they're mooing, says Beth Roszak, a giraffe zookeeper. Adult giraffes occasionally snort and may even make a sound like a throaty growl or grumble.

QUESTION: How much does an ostrich egg weigh? How many chicken eggs would it take to make one ostrich egg? – Evan Athy, Age 8, Milwaukee

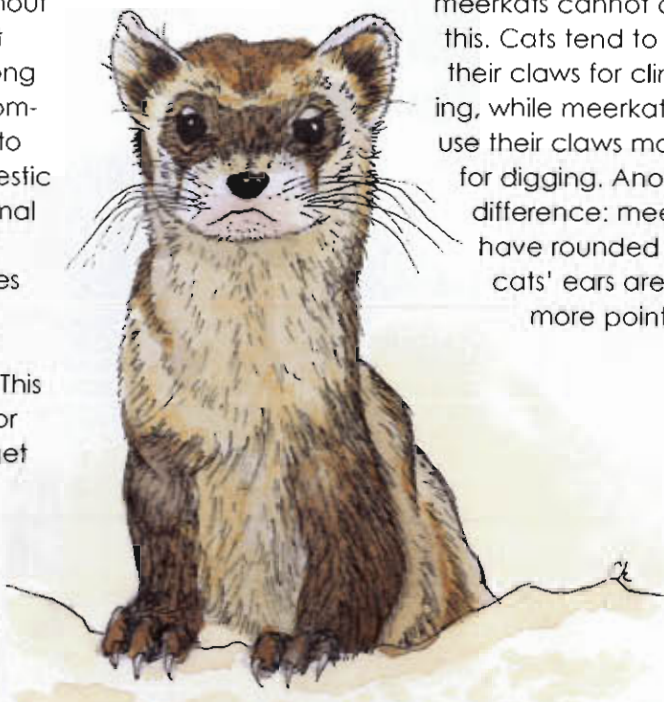
An ostrich egg weighs 3.03 pounds, according to Bob Hoffmann in the Milwaukee County Zoo's Winter Quarters. It would take 27 chicken eggs to make one ostrich egg.



Kids Alive 14

QUESTION: Can you take the smell off a ferret? My dad's family member had one; it did not smell at all. – Karl Bloom, Milwaukee

Ferrets have scent glands throughout their body that produce a strong odor. So it is common practice to de-scent domestic ferrets. An animal doctor (veterinarian) removes the two scent glands underneath the tail. This lessens the odor but does not get rid of it completely. To remove more of the odor, bathe the ferret regularly and have it spayed (neutered).



QUESTION: Why aren't meerkats cats? – Johnny Hacker, 10, Carol Stream, Ill.

Meerkats belong to the family viverridae. Cats belong to the felidae family. The body and skull shapes of meerkats are more closely related to a mongoose than a cat's. Zookeeper Rhonda Crenshaw

in the Small Mammals building at the Milwaukee County Zoo says that cats can pull in their claws so as not to hurt you; meerkats cannot do this. Cats tend to use their claws for climbing, while meerkats use their claws more for digging. Another difference: meerkats have rounded ears; cats' ears are more pointed.

Kids! Send us your animal questions. Remember to include your first & last name, age, phone and full address.



Monkeys in Maya Ruins

BY FRAN BAUER

The past becomes an exciting part of our future in July when the Milwaukee County Zoo's spider monkeys move to a home inspired by the ruins of a city that was the glory of the ancient Maya world.

"We wanted to create a setting that gives the impression you're walking into the grand plaza formed by the pyramid walls in the Maya Temple at Tikal [in Guatemala]," said architect Paula Verboomen, of Hammel, Green and Abrahamson Inc. of Milwaukee,



Architect's rendering of the Temple Monkeys of Tikal exhibit from outdoors.

designer of the new exhibit. Everything from temples in a background mural to ceremonial stone posts known as stelae recreates the era when the Maya flourished in Guatemala, Belize and other parts of Central America, from about 200 to 800 A.D.

The new exhibit, Temple Monkeys of Tikal, opens July 15 and is financed by the Zoological Society's Annual Appeal* and a major gift from the Krause Family Foundation. The exhibit is part of a commitment that the Society made to the Zoo in the mid-'90s to spend a quarter-million dollars upgrading or adding a permanent Zoo exhibit each year, says Dr. Gil Boese, Society president. In reality, the Society has spent much more. "For example, Temple Monkeys will cost about \$340,000," says Boese.

"This is a true-to-life setting for the spider monkey," says Bruce Beehler, the Zoo's deputy director. They will be able to scamper across treetops and swing from trailing vines in a rain-forest setting, just as they do in the 125,000-acre park surrounding the ancient city of Tikal. The ruins of more

than 3,000 structures – from temples and ball courts to terraces and steam baths – have been uncovered in a six-square-mile area at Tikal.

Tikal is the only site in the world designated as both a cultural and natural World Heritage site by the United

Nations, giving the ruins a status similar to the ruins of Machu Pichu in Peru and the Galapagos Islands. Architect Verboomen modeled the exhibit partly on photos taken at Tikal

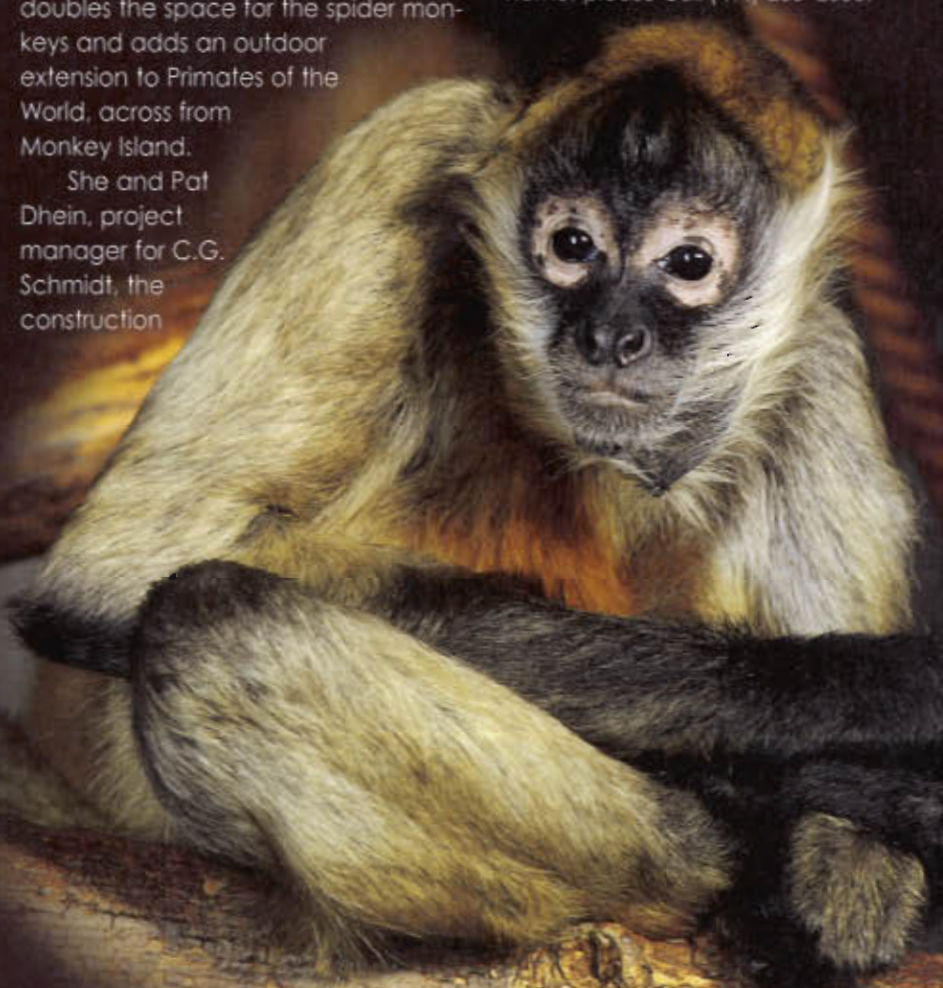
by both Beehler and Boese. The exhibit doubles the space for the spider monkeys and adds an outdoor extension to Primates of the World, across from Monkey Island.

She and Pat Dhein, project manager for C.G. Schmidt, the construction

firm building the exhibit, also talked with Zoo staff about their needs. They wanted to make sure the rocklike setting would be easy to clean. So the shadows have been painted in, allowing most of the surfaces to remain smooth. Plans include adding grating to ceilings, so monkeys can swing freely at treetop level. Skylights as well as recessed lighting will make the setting seem as if one is strolling through the actual ruins on a sunny day.

"The area around Tikal is very striking and one that everyone should have the chance to experience," said Beehler. "This exhibit is a unique and amazing sight." 🐾

*Look for your invitation to a members' premiere of this exhibit in the package containing Alive. If you would like to contribute to the spider monkeys' home, please call (414) 258-2333.



Bark if You Love Prairie Dogs!



The Zoo's new prairie dogs will go on exhibit to the left of the black bear exhibit. Their new home will feature about eight feet of rocky, clay soil, perfect for these burrowing rodents, which spend a lot of time packing mounds of dirt with their foreheads to protect the entrance to their tunnels.

BY SANDRA WHITEHEAD

The Milwaukee County Zoo's North American mammal collection, one of the best in the country, is about to get even better with the addition of prairie dogs, a porcupine and a new home for Scarlet, the Zoo's badger.

"The Milwaukee County Zoo was one of the first major zoos in the country to prominently feature North American animals," says large-mammal curator Bess Frank. Today the collection includes elk, moose, caribou, mule deer, Dall sheep, Alaskan brown bears, polar bears, black bears, grizzly bears, timber wolves, a badger, California sea lions and a harbor seal.

Few Americans see prairie dogs or porcupines in the wild, even though they are common in some areas, says Frank. Prairie dogs – plump, furry rodents a little more than a foot long when full-grown – dive into their underground burrows at the first sign of danger. And porcupines, being nocturnal, spend the daylight hours sleeping. Zoos, however, can design exhibits in which these animals can be observed.



"Our motive is educational," says Frank. "Providing an extensive collection of North American animals helps people understand and appreciate our native wildlife."

By showcasing prairie dogs, the Zoo follows a tradition set by Thomas Jefferson. In 1804, long before America had any zoos, the famous explorers Lewis and Clark were commissioned by the United States

Congress under Jefferson to explore the Northwest Territory. They captured a prairie dog and brought it to the president. Jefferson forwarded it to the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, making it the first North American mammal to be displayed and studied.

The new exhibits are expected to open just in time for the Zoo's popular food-and-music event, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel A la Carte, Aug. 17-20.

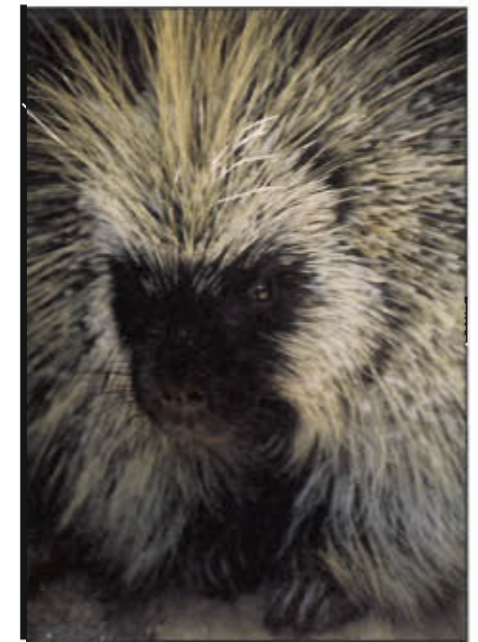
The North American collection runs north of Lake Evinrude from reindeer and grizzly bears to Dall sheep and brown bears. As you face the black bear exhibit, you will see the new prairie dog exhibit to your left and the badger's new home to your right. The porcupine will be housed next to the Alaskan brown bears in the former home of Homer the wolverine. Homer had been on loan from a Minnesota zoo. He was recalled for a breeding program.

Plan to spend extra time watching the prairie dogs, suggests Frank. In spring, summer and early fall, they are active during the day and love the sun. Some hiber-

nate or sleep all winter. In warm weather, they climb out of their burrows at sunrise and greet each other with a morning kiss. They identify family members by smell. Like roly-poly puppies, they seem to play all

day, although they spend a lot of time cleaning and packing mounds of dirt with their foreheads to protect the entrance to their tunnels. They nuzzle, wrestle, scamper about and groom each other until sunset, when they go back down into their burrows.

Of course, they aren't dogs at all, says Frank. Their relatives include squirrels, beavers, and woodchucks. They were named



A North American porcupine will be housed next to the Alaskan brown bears in the former home of Homer the wolverine. Porcupine photos by Jessie Cohen, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution/National Zoological Park

"dogs" for their bark, a warning signal that sounds like the shrill bark of a small dog.

"They don't make good pets," she adds. "Like other rodents, they like to chew. They also need to dig and wouldn't be happy without being able to burrow six or eight feet into the ground." Their new home will have rocky, clay soil at least eight feet deep. On the prairie, their digging helps maintain soil quality by allowing water to penetrate through hard topsoil.

Zoological Society member Jeffrey Peil, a computer technician at Intelligent Network Solutions, Inc., donated his services to help plan the exhibit. He took digital photographs of the existing space and used them to create a computer-assisted design incorporating proposed changes.

Prairie dogs are unusually social animals that live in towns, protecting and caring for each other, says Frank. They spend a lot of time eating, especially in the fall when fattening up for winter. In their native habitat, the prairie states from the Dakotas to Texas and from Utah to Kansas, they eat grass and insects. In the Zoo, they graze on hay, vegetables and nutritional pellets.

See if you can pick out the sentries, the ones sitting on their hind haunches, keeping

Serengeti Circle

watch for predators such as hawks, snakes, coyotes and black-footed ferrets. If they spot one, they throw their heads back and let out high-pitched yelps that alert the town. On the prairie, a town may hold 100, even 1,000 animals, and they divide into neighborhoods with invisible borders. Fights break out when males from one area set foot in another.

Our Zoo's prairie dogs are coming from the Lincoln Park Zoo in Manitowoc, Wis., which has a prairie dog town of about 21, says Randy Albright, assistant parks director of the Manitowoc Park and Recreation Department. "We're pleased to be able to send these prairie dogs to Milwaukee. They are our most popular attraction."

Our Zoo may get four to six animals, both parents and pups that are nearly

full-grown. "We are mimicking the natural migration behavior," says Bess Frank. "When a group gets larger, some get pushed out to found their own town."

In captivity, prairie dogs (which weigh one to three pounds) live about 10 years; in the wild, only about eight.


Albright praises the exchange program that the Milwaukee County Zoo has with smaller Wisconsin zoos. Manitowoc has two snow leopards on loan from Milwaukee.

When the prairie dogs arrive, they will be examined by veterinarians, who will place microchips under their skin to help identify them.

Meanwhile, Scarlet the badger, at the Zoo since 1996, will move next to the black bears into an exhibit that will be filled to give her room to dig. "She will be much



more visible in the small exhibit than she was on the other side [of the bears]," says Frank. "At a Wisconsin zoo, it's important to have a badger for everyone to see."

Frank hopes to have a porcupine by late summer or fall. "Native animals are harder to find than the exotic ones. We have a big collection, but most zoos don't." In space next to the Alaskan brown bears zookeepers are setting up a tree for him to sleep in so visitors can get a good look at him. 

Scarlet the badger's new home will be to the right of the black bear exhibit.



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Meg Fox (fore) and Elizabeth Plate, of Strong Investments, were among more than 100 guests entertained by drummers David Shabaka (back right) and Cecilio Negrón at the Fifth Annual Serengeti Circle Luncheon at the Zoo, May 5. Strong Investments is the new sponsor of the Zoo's carousel, featuring 30 handcrafted animals.

What's Gnu

Bearded Dragon

Arrived: March 24, 2000
Aquatic & Reptile Center

Ever since dinosaurs captured our imaginations, living dragonlike creatures also have gained attention. The bearded dragon is one of those. This exotic reptile comes from Australia, where lizards usually are known as dragons. It can come in "designer" colors (orange, pink, red) and has a black throat that expands when it gets excited and looks like a beard. Bearded dragons often are sold in pet stores, even though they require special care. Craig Berg, curator of fish and reptiles, brought one from the Bronx Zoo to the Milwaukee County Zoo to use in Animals in Action programs held next to the Aquatic & Reptile Center (11:30 a.m. daily through Labor Day). Children can view the dragon up close, and Berg plans to use it to show differences between snakes and lizards. This dragon can exist in very dry areas because its spiny scales keep its skin from drying out by preventing evaporation, and it excretes urine in a solid form.



Desert Grassland Whiptail Lizards

Arrived: March 10, 2000
Aquatic & Reptile Center

Try to catch a whiptail lizard by the tail, and you may be left holding just the tail, says Craig Berg, curator of fish and reptiles for the Milwaukee County Zoo. Breakaway tails are a way whiptails escape from predators.

"This animal is about 10 inches long, and most of it (about six

inches) is tail," he notes. These blue-gray lizards with yellow pinstripes also are known as racerunners because of their speed. They're very active and fun to watch, Berg says. Four whiptails, which came from Buffalo Zoological Gardens, now live in the desert exhibit with chuck-wallas, Mexican beaded lizards, spiny lizards, and black-tailed rattlesnakes. One oddity: These desert grassland whiptails, native to the Southwest, are all clones and all females. This subspecies is asexual (parthenogenetic, or able to reproduce without a male). All of a female's offspring are exact duplications of her. Whiptails are not endangered, but their grassland habitats are in decline. Wisconsin has a whiptail species called the six-lined racerunner, in the western part of the state.

Cotton-top Tamarin

Arrived: March 1, 2000
Small Mammals Building

Zachariah, the new cotton-top tamarin brought in from the Disney Animal Kingdom in Florida as company for the female Virgil-Lee, has become a stepdad without knowing it. Turns out Virgil-Lee already was pregnant by Anthony, a tamarin traded to Disney so he could breed and increase the genetic pool for endangered tamarins. In the world of tamarins and marmosets, it's the dads that care for the young. The mothers reclaim them only for nursing. Zachariah is the fourth male to share an exhibit with Virgil-Lee, a female born 13 years ago at the Milwaukee County Zoo. The two mated soon after Zachariah arrived. She had a baby May 1, and now Zachariah is caring for it. If he didn't think it was his, he would reject it, says Nina Schaefer, Small Mammals supervisor. The cotton-tops spend a lot of time in the treetops of their exhibit, just as they would in their natural habitat: the rain forests of South America, which

are disappearing rapidly. Zachariah, born in the Roger Williams Zoo in Providence, RI, will eat fruit or insects right out of zookeepers' hands, Schaefer says.





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