

Alive

Zoological Society of Milwaukee County SPRING 1997



Johnathan
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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



The continuous—albeit fun—challenge of keeping Zoological Society members and the people of our community excited about the Zoo goes far beyond opening the front gate every morning. With the Zoo, we are actively involved in finding new and engaging, interactive, multi-dimensional exhibits: bringing rare or unusual animals to our Zoo; and constructing or renovating buildings that will benefit animals and our guests now and in the future.

This summer, we're premiering exhibits that reflect the Zoo's and Zoological Society's commitment to all three of these goals, thanks to major support from community-minded corporations and one very special individual:

Ameritech's Mechanics of Nature, a spectacular exhibit of mechanized animals—from bats to giraffes—that reveals nature's genius as master planner. The exhibit, sponsored by Ameritech, lets you look inside the animals while machine parts and gadgets show what makes them work.

The new **Borchert Family Special Exhibits Building**, which will house Ameritech's Mechanics of Nature this summer and countless traveling exhibits in the future. Our long-time friend Bill Borchert Larson donated the building to honor his grandfather, Otto Borchert, who was a great supporter of the Zoo.

And wart hogs, brought to the Zoo by **Wisconsin Electric/A Wisconsin Energy Company**. These are two pigs that are bound to inspire the awe of zoo visitors who have never seen such beastly beauties—warts and all.

I hope you'll join the Zoological Society, the Zoo and our sponsors in celebrating the opening of these exhibits and the August debut of the **Koala Walkabout**. Watch your mail for invitations!

Gil Boese, Ph.D., President
Zoological Society



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

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Alive

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Ever want to see inside a giraffe, rhino, bat, platypus, giant squid, chameleon, grasshopper or fly? Be among the first in the country to see these animals as robotic, scientific wonders in Ameritech's Mechanics of Nature, opening at the Zoo in June.

DEPARTMENTS

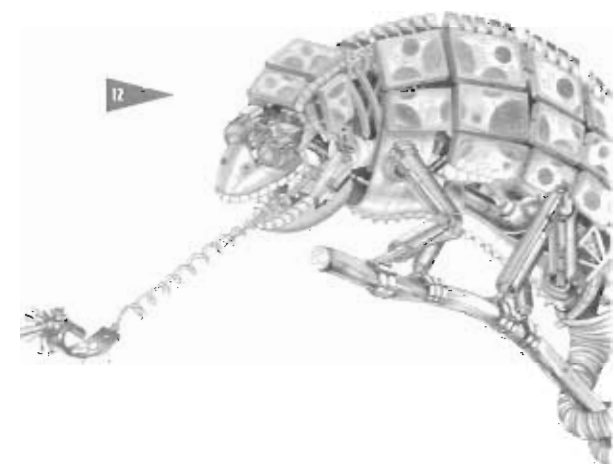
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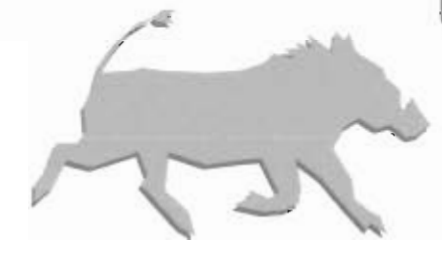
ON THE COVER

Eyes of the Beholder – Wart hog
by Jay Jochem





Beastly Beauties wart hogs



Wart hog is about as descriptive a name as you'll find in the animal kingdom. The beast is, after all, a swine with six big warts on its face.

While its name and appearance may not inspire the awe of, say, a polar bear, the wart hog is an interesting animal in its own right and one exquisitely designed for the hot grasslands of Africa.

And it's coming to a zoo near you this summer for a limited engagement, thanks to funding from Wisconsin Electric/A Wisconsin Energy Company.

In fact, two wart hogs will arrive at the Milwaukee County Zoo this spring and stay until fall. Sensitive to cold, they cannot tolerate a Wisconsin winter. Their short stay in Milwaukee is due in part to the fact that they're rarely found in U.S. zoos. There are thought to be just 50 here in captivity.

Thus it behooves zoo patrons to make plans to see this unusual, some might say unsightly, summer visitor. "I think the public will really love it," says Bruce Beehler, deputy director of the Milwaukee County Zoo. "This gives our guests an opportunity to learn about wild pigs, which are really amazing animals. And let's face it. They have an interesting appearance. You might say it's a face only a mother could love."

To say the wart hog is homely, however, would be to judge the pig without looking past its mug. Let's look at that face for a moment. Every protuberance

and the last set mostly are obscured by a moustache of white bristles on its upper jaw.

and the last set mostly are obscured by a moustache of white bristles on its upper jaw. Consider this your primer to the Wart Hog 1997 Summer Tour. The wart hog carries its 100 to 300 pounds on a three- to five-foot-long grayish body with a scattering of bristles. It has a spindly tail that stands straight up when the animal runs. A tassel at the end makes



wart, tusk or snout - is there for a reason. it look as though it's flying a small pennant. "Sort of like the flag on a bicycle," Beehler observes.

But it is, no doubt, the face that sets the wart hog apart. "They do have a striking appearance," Beehler says. "It's their sweeping tusks, that shovel-like face."

We'll start at the beginning, with the warts - three pair to be precise. The largest reside on either side of the wart hog's face, just below its eyes. The next pair rests about halfway between its eyes and tusks.

and the last set mostly are obscured by a moustache of white bristles on its upper jaw.

The warts are more prominent on the males and act something like the headgear that boxers use during sparring. These wild swine determine their social order by squaring off head to head with one another, pushing one another around. The warts, a fleshy connective tissue, help protect and cushion blows to the side of the head. Wart hogs can strike with enough force to fracture the massive skull or jaw of a combatant.

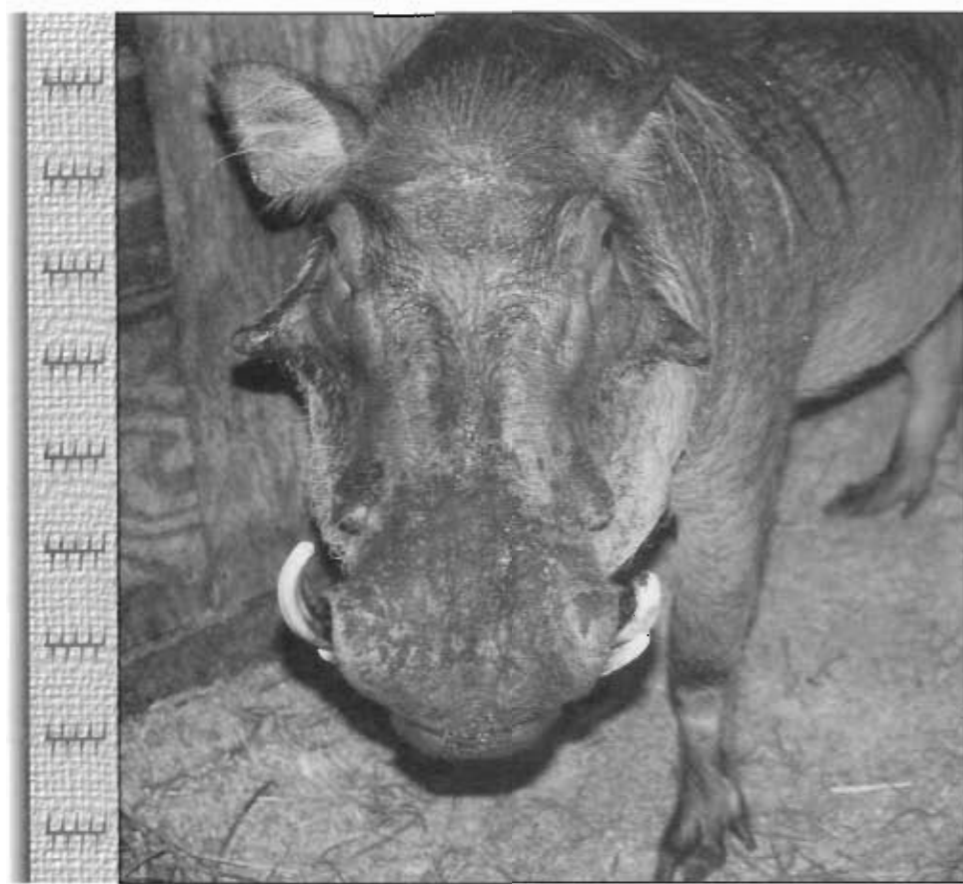
Wart hogs carry two pair of tusks as well. The curved upper tusks are used for sparring. The sharp lower tusks are formidable as defensive weapons and allow the animal to dig for roots and turn over rocks in search of insects.

"They're really very intelligent omnivores that will eat grass, roots, fruit, insects and even carrion," Beehler notes.

Get past that warty, tusky face, he advises, and you'll find an animal whose habits make it one interesting pig. They live in small groups, usually a male, female and a litter or two, Beehler says. But it's the home that the wart hog makes that sets it apart.

"They're the only species of pig that goes into burrows," Beehler points out. "They excavate holes or use those abandoned by aardvarks. It's hard to imagine pigs living underground."

Young wart hogs file face first into the burrows. The adult, meanwhile, backs



Photos courtesy of International Animal Exchange, Inc.

GEOGRAPHY



Wart-hog Distribution: Open grasslands of central, eastern, and southern Africa




in, displaying its formidable tusks at the front door to discourage such predators as lions, leopards and cheetahs.

When the wart hog exhibit opens to the public May 10 (Zoological Society members get to see them before then), Zoo visitors will have the chance to see up close how the animal lives in the wild.

The male and female wart hog will set up housekeeping next to the African elephants. A deck is being built to allow visitors a hog's-eye-view of the animal, and a mound will be constructed to allow the swine to dig.

There will, of course, also be mud. "Like most pigs, they like to roll around in it," Beehler says. "They do that to regulate their body temperature because they have no sweat glands. The mud also helps to keep insects off their skin."

"Members and their friends should come out to see them.

You don't want to miss seeing a wart hog face to face." 



Hog Facts

Impress your family and friends with your grasp of wart hog facts. Here's a tip sheet you'll want to read before you visit the wart hogs, which will be on exhibit at the Milwaukee County Zoo May 10 to Sept. 30.

- ▶ The typical size of a wart hog litter is three or four. Occasionally they give birth to as many as seven. But females have only four nipples, making survival of more than four unlikely. Adults live 12 to 15 years in captivity.
- ▶ They are social animals prone to nuzzling with one another. They live in groups called "sounders," of six to 18 animals. Wart hogs are not endangered.
- ▶ Wart hogs have poor vision, but their eyes are set high on their faces, allowing them to scan the open plains that are their natural habitat.
- ▶ Their high-set eyes, short neck and long legs make it necessary for them to kneel down to eat. They are born with thick, tough pads on their knees and shuffle on these pads while eating.
- ▶ Speaking of legs, the wart hog has the longest of any pig species and can run more than 30 mph.
- ▶ Wart hogs are rare in American zoos. As they can carry African swine fever, they must be quarantined for some time to prevent transmission of diseases to domestic swine here.

A TERN FOR THE BETTER



Photos courtesy of Horicon National Wildlife Refuge

The future for terns in Wisconsin is as precarious as the flimsy nests they build at water's edge.

A gust of wind, even the swirl of a carp's tail, can be enough to swamp a nest and send a tern's eggs to ruin in the muck of a marsh bottom.

For Forster's and black terns, rare birds to be sure in Wisconsin, the loss of wetland habitat deepens their plight. But hopes for terns have been buoyed in recent years at Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, thanks in part to funding from the Zoological Society of Milwaukee County.

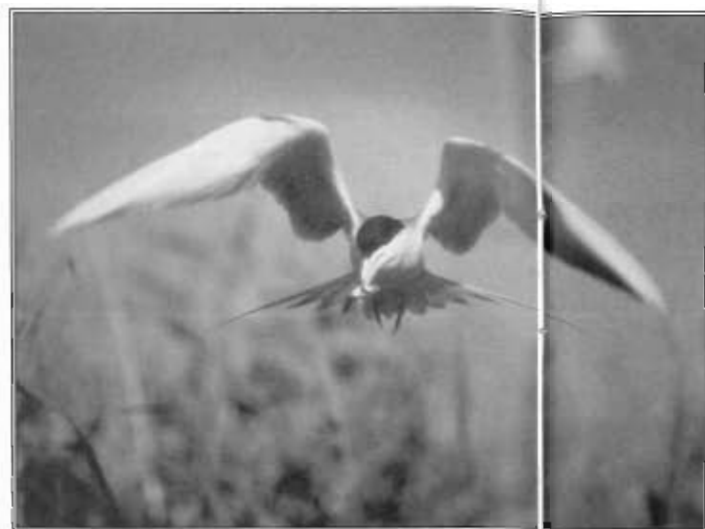
Horicon, North America's largest cattail marsh and a haven for birds and waterfowl, plays host to a historic colony of terns, says Diane Penttila, a wildlife biolo-

gist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Finding out where terns prefer to nest, and helping them set up housekeeping, has become a consuming interest for Penttila and her staff in recent years.

She describes terns the way a parent might speak of a treasured but flighty child, beloved but bedeviling at the same time.

"Terns are similar to gulls in appearance," she says. "But they're unique in that they fish from the air and have the ability, more or less, to hover. They hover by changing their wing beats so that they hang in the air over one spot. Then they dive straight down and catch fish generally close to the surface. It's really neat to watch."



The Forster's tern and black tern, both rare in Wisconsin, are the focus of a Zoological Society-supported, multi-year study of terns at Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, North America's largest cattail marsh.

Right: Hoping to boost the numbers of black terns and Forster's terns through more successful breeding, wildlife biologists experiment with floating wooden nest boxes.



Above: Biologist Monica Shively checks Forster's tern eggs that were laid in a nest box.



And the birds themselves are striking to look at, particularly in their spring and summer plumage. The Forster's tern features a grayish body, white breast and cheeks topped by a dapper black cap. The black tern, as its name suggests, is generally dark as a crow during the breeding season with the exception of gray on its wings and tail. Both birds have a tail that resembles crossed swords and aids them in their aerial acrobatics.

Yet the terns share the habit of building less-than-sturdy homes for their young. The structures are unlikely to survive the wakes thrown up by carp foraging and breeding in the shallow water. Storms take their toll as well, whipping up waves on the marsh's Main Pool, an 11,000-acre body of water. Otters, too, are a threat as they eat terns' eggs.

All of which is to say, it's not easy being a tern.

"Their nests are just plain scary," says

Penttila, who, along with her staff, has been studying terns at Horicon since the early 1990s. "They usually use old muskrat houses or old muskrat feeding mats. In a heartbeat those things can be gone. When we first started, I thought, 'Man, these nests are in jeopardy. Let's see if we can do something for these birds.'"

First, biologists needed to find the birds within the labyrinth of canals and pools and cattail clumps that make up the marsh. Tracking down their colonies involves following terns by boat and on foot.

What biologists found a few years ago were sparse colonies of Forster's terns, while black terns seemed to fare a little better. Hoping to bolster both terns' numbers through more successful breeding, biologists experimented with artificial nests—essentially buoyant wooden boxes.

Since then, Penttila and others have set out each spring in late April or early May dozens of man-made nests, testing

different spots on the marsh to find the optimum tern habitat. They place decoys near the platforms to draw real terns.

It works, to a degree.

"One got the heck pecked out of it," Penttila recalls. "So we know that they were checking it out."

By June, researchers revisit the nests to check for eggs. If biologists find eggs, they float them to test their buoyancy. "If it's close to hatching, it floats better," Penttila explains. "It's sort of like a hard-boiled egg. They have an air pocket in them."

Biologists continue to study the rates at which the eggs hatch and the birds fledge. The latter, Penttila points out, can be problematic.

"Once they fledge, it's tough to determine their numbers," she says. "Baby terns are just like little bobbers on the water. They seem to scatter all over."

As it turns out, black terns often es-

GEOGRAPHY



Horicon Marsh



in late April or early May, wildlife biologists set out into the marsh to find the optimum tern habitat. Here, Monica Shively gets ready to place decoys near artificial nest platforms to draw real terns.

chew the faux nest, preferring to build their own. But Forster's terns seem to like pre-built homes. They'll have new nests again this year, thanks in part to the Zoological Society, which has financially supported conservation of shorebirds at the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge since the late 1980s.

"It's an exciting project," Penttila says. "We couldn't do it without this funding."



A Waldrapp Ibis with an open wound gets expert treatment from Wallace and other members of the Zoo's veterinary team.

and served her residency at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. She also worked for two years at the Indianapolis Zoo before coming to Milwaukee.

One of only two veterinarians on staff, Wallace must be able to treat everything from fish and fowl to lizards and lions. "We pretty much take care of all the animals in the collection," she says. "It can be very rewarding and frustrating, too, because with some of these rare animals very little is known about them. But it is fun. There's rarely a dull moment."

She cites the Humboldt penguins as among her favorite animals at the Zoo. The Zoological Society of Milwaukee has helped fund work to help conserve the birds in South America. "They're fascinating," she says. "They're flightless birds who spend most of their time at sea."

She also admires the big cats and bears. And, she's happy to report, the lions and tigers, grizzlies and polars all are very healthy.

Thanks, not doubt, to Wallace and the Zoo staff.

Treats, anything from bananas to Cheerios, which commonly are used during primate behavior training, also must be examined. "You want to make sure that they get enough to eat," he says. "But you also don't want to waste food. Unused

food can be a big, unnecessary expense for a zoo."

How the animals actually get food from hand or paw or claw to mouth and stomach also will be scrutinized.

"You need to look at their physiology

ON THE JOB

**Roberta Wallace,
Senior Staff
Veterinarian**

From a young age, Roberta Wallace loved going to the zoo.

She still does, though now she's translated that enjoyment into her vocation. As a veterinarian at the Milwaukee County Zoo, Wallace combines a love of animals with the skill to heal them.

"It's really a great job," says Wallace, a calm and thoughtful person who came to the Zoo in 1989. "I remember as a girl that I loved the zoo. And once I started vet school, I knew I wanted to work in one."

She earned a veterinary degree at Cornell University

to see how they eat and how efficiently they process their food," Baer says. "You also need to know about biochemistry to understand how the animal digests what it eats. You have to put all of that together and try to find out what the proper diet is."

And if that diet calls for fruit, finding the appropriate choice is not necessarily easy as pie. "The fruits that we eat have been cultivated commercially to taste good to us," Baer says. "It may taste good to a monkey, too, but that doesn't mean it has the nutrients the animal requires."

Once the menus have been analyzed, Baer and Associates will identify problem areas and recommend revised diets. Guidelines on buying commercial feed also will be developed.

Zookeepers in daily contact with the animals will be involved in ongoing discussions about menu planning.

Baer saluted the Zoo for taking an active approach in developing healthful eating habits for its animals. "Milwaukee is a progressive zoo," he says. "Remember that the one thing you do every day for your animals is feed them. But if you're not doing it right, their health and well-being are at stake. Milwaukee wanted to address this before problems developed. That's the cornerstone of good management."

It's a foundation that couldn't be laid without the help of the Zoological Society, Wallace says.

"Most zoos don't have funding for a full-time nutritionist," she says. "We certainly don't. This is going to be a tremendous benefit for our animals. But it's a project that probably wouldn't have occurred without society funding. Zoological Society members deserve credit for this."

Since 1992, the Zoological Society of Milwaukee, with major support from Roundy's Pick'n Save, has picked up the \$350,000+ annual cost of feeding all the animals at the Milwaukee County Zoo.



KIDS!

When you are finished reading this page, get out your crayons and color the animals, just like in your coloring books.

Alive

for kids and families

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY SPRING 1997

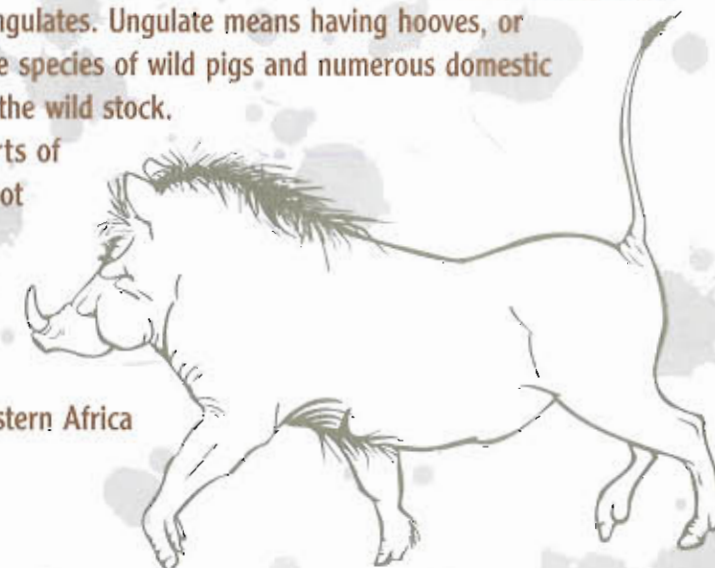
PULL-OUT SECTION



Going Hog Wild

Starting May 10, 1997, two wart hogs will be visiting the Milwaukee County Zoo for the summer, thanks to Wisconsin Electric, a Wisconsin Energy Company. Wart hogs belong to the pig family, but they have high-set eyes, long tails and grow up to 60 inches long and weigh up to 265 pounds. Members of the pig family (Suidae) are all even-toed ungulates. Ungulate means having hooves, or horny coverings on the feet. There are nine species of wild pigs and numerous domestic pigs. The domestic pigs were reared from the wild stock. Here are three wild pigs from different parts of the world. Wart hogs and wild boars are not endangered, but pygmy hogs are.

WART HOG - from eastern Africa



WILD BOAR - from Europe, North Africa, Asia, Sumatra, Japan and Taiwan. Introduced into North America.



PYGMY HOG - from the Himalayan foothills in south-central Asia.



Wouldn't it be fun to draw pictures of pigs and other animals and then tell stories about them? That's just what students at McKinley School in Appleton did. McKinley is one of 89 schools in the Fox River Valley that are participating in the Zoological Society's Keepers of the Wild Program, sponsored by Kimberly-Clark. Keepers of the Wild is an animal-exploration science curriculum for third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students. It also includes visits in April and May to Fox River Valley schools by the Zoological Society's Kerry Scanlan, bringing skulls and other animal artifacts. Below are pictures and story excerpts from students in Shelly Zimmer's fifth-grade class at McKinley. If you'd like to do your own drawings paired with stories, we'd like to see them and print the best ones here. But please don't use crayons or light-colored pencils or paint. Pictures need to have dark, strong lines in order to show up in print. Send drawings and stories to: ALIVE, Education, 10005 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53226. We will display your creations in the atrium of our Education Center.

PIG

Some of the first tame pigs were raised about 7,000 years ago in China. Pigs grow faster than most farm animals. They also eat almost anything. Pigs have short legs with sharp toes called hooves. A pig's snout, or nose, is strong and flexible for digging into the ground for roots. The world has nearly 800 million pigs.

Picture and story by Boe Baitinger



A LEOPARD FROG

Once upon a time a frog named John got lost. So he decided to find a place to sleep. So he did find it, but he was very hungry. So he found flies and decided to eat. Next morning he found his mother and never got lost again.

Picture and story by Meng Thao



Picture and story by Katie Pease

ANGEL FISH

The ocean is full of wonders. Today I'm going to take you on an adventure with a very original angel fish named Angel. Angel was very nice, but no one seemed to notice her or her originality. Her family didn't even notice her. She was very sad. I remember one time when she was very, very young. She tried so hard to get attention that she even went to the newspaper company and took all the newspapers that were going out the next day and taped her school picture in all of the newspapers, along with a paragraph about herself. The results were not so good. All of her friends and family made fun of her.

Becca Matteson, age 7
East Troy, WI

Dear Becca, Dana, one of the zookeepers from the giraffe area, answered your question: **How do giraffes sleep?** Giraffes generally sleep somewhat on their side — not completely flat out. Often they stretch out their back legs and curl their front legs under their sternum — kind of sidesaddle for short sleep cycles of 30 to 60 minutes at a time.

Phillip Stillings
Milwaukee, WI

Dear Phillip, You wanted to know: **Where do Siberian tigers come from?** Siberian tigers come from Siberia and a small corner of North Korea. I invite you and your family to visit the Feline Building at the Zoo this summer to see the Siberian tigers and our new, expanded, information-filled signs about the cats.



Kayla Knifans, age 10
Delavan, WI

Dear Kayla, You had two questions: **How do you train a lion without it attacking you? If you find a full-grown lion, how do you train it?** Neil from the Feline Building wanted you to know that we do not train the lions at the Zoo. However, we do condition them to go out into an outside yard and come back into the building. We condition the lions by rewarding them with food and also by making their visits outdoors a daily routine. All the cats except the caracals go outside at least a little while every day, winter and summer.

Shannon Raash, age 7
South Milwaukee, WI

Dear Shannon, When you were at the Zoo in winter, you noticed that the sea lions were swimming on their backs. So you asked: **Why do the sea lions swim on their backs more than their stomachs? Was it because it was winter?**

According to Beth from the Miller Oceans of Fun Sea Lion Show, there really is no physical explanation for sea lions spending time swimming on their backs. They may be doing it in "play" or perhaps for a change of pace.

Dear Curious Corner Questioners:

Thanks for all your questions. We hope more of you can join in the fun. Send your questions to: Curious, Zoological Society, 10005 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53226. Or join us in the fun of learning about animals at our Summer Adventure Camps (call 414-256-5424 for a camp brochure).

Scientifically yours,
Dr. Marisa Zoology

If you're getting excited about the new exhibits coming to the Zoo this summer, here's a way to learn about them ahead of time. The wart hogs, sponsored by Wisconsin Electric/A Wisconsin Energy Company, will be here May 10 through September 30. On June 14, Ameritech's Mechanics of Nature exhibit will open. It's filled with robotic creatures, from a rhinoceros to a chameleon. (See the stories in this magazine about both of the exhibits.) Since this series of animal cards features animals you will see at the Zoo, today we focus on wart hogs, rhinos and chameleons. College Interns funded by Applied Power Corporation helped gather the information for these collectible cards.

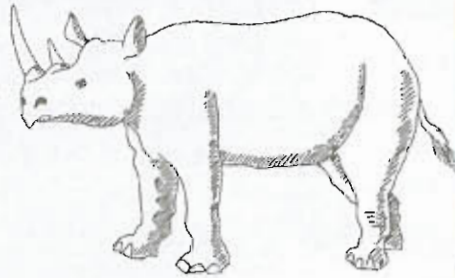
Color in the animals, cut apart the cards and you are on your way to creating your own animal-card collection. (Note: Don't cut out the cards until you've read the backside of this page.)

REMINDER

Education programs for ages 3-13, plus family programs, now are listed in your Wild Things newsletter.

MAMMAL

BLACK RHINO



SCIENTIFIC NAME:
Diceros bicornis

Black rhinos are found in Africa's mountainous rain forests to arid scrublands. They have a prehensile upper lip for grasping the branch ends of woody plants. They weigh between 2,100 and 2,900 pounds and live about 40 years.

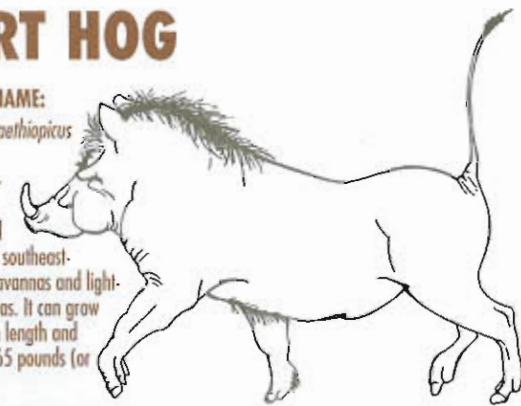
- STATUS:** HIGHLY ENDANGERED
- DIET IN THE WILD:** Leaves, twigs and bushes, but not a lot of grass.
- ZOO DIET:** 1 bale of alfalfa and timothy hay mix, 20 pounds of high-fiber pellets daily and sweet potatoes, which are used to get them to cooperate.
- FUN FACTS:** The name rhinoceros comes from the Greek words "rhino" (meaning nose) and "ceros" (meaning horn). The rhino's distinctive horns on its snout have no bony core; they are merely a large group of keratin fibers perched on a roughened area on the skull.

MAMMAL

WART HOG

SCIENTIFIC NAME:
Phacochoerus aethiopicus

This wild member of the pig family is found in eastern and southeastern Africa in savannas and lightly forested areas. It can grow to 60 inches in length and weigh up to 265 pounds (or more).



- STATUS:** Common
- DIET IN THE WILD:** Omnivores, wart hogs eat both plants (grass, roots, berries, bark of young trees) and animals (carrion and dung); also eat dirt and bones for minerals.
- ZOO DIET:** Prepared mix, fruits and vegetables
- FUN FACTS:** They got the name wart hog from four prominent (and two hidden) "warts," or thickened skin, on their face. The top speed of a wart hog as it's trying to escape a predator is about 35 mph. They like to trot with their tails straight up, like antennas. To feed, they crawl along on their padded front knees.

REPTILE

VEILED CHAMELEON



SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Chamaeleo calyptratus*

This colorful reptile can be found in the mountainous desert areas of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Males can grow as large as 2 feet long, including tail, while females are about 14 inches long.

- STATUS:** Common
- DIET IN THE WILD:** Anything small enough to swallow: birds, lizards, insects
- ZOO DIET:** Baby mice, insects of all sorts, such as crickets and cockroaches
- FUN FACTS:** The chameleon's color change is related more to mood and activity than strictly to providing camouflage.

Speaking for the Animals

"Who can give me the meaning of the word extinct?" Leon Mays asks fifth graders at Story School in Milwaukee. "Something that doesn't exist anymore," offers one boy.

"Right," says Mays, who is visiting the school as part of the Zoological Society's Animal Ambassador educational-outreach program. "And who was the first zookeeper?" he asks. After a bunch of hints, the children guess it: Noah. "That was one of Noah's responsibilities: to keep the animals from becoming extinct," Mays says.

His example leads into the idea that a zoo is a modern-day ark, helping keep alive animals that are endangered in the wild. And the Zoological Society of Milwaukee teaches people about what they can do to help save animals and the environments in which they live. You, he tells the students, will become "Animal Ambassadors."

"An Animal Ambassador speaks on behalf of animals. Your primary objective is to learn as much as you can about animals," Mays starts them on that process, answering questions about animals from tigers to sharks. Next, the children will make two trips to the Milwaukee County Zoo, touring the animal buildings and the Zoo hospital, hearing a program by Mays about birds and exploring the science of animals in the Zoological Society's Living & Learning Lab.

Then the children have projects to do: research on their favorite animals, worksheets to complete with their families, re-

ports on their Zoo visits, a newsletter on the Animal Ambassador program and artwork to create as gifts to the companies and groups that sponsor each school. More than 1,100 pupils from 19 schools are in this year's Animal Ambassador program, each school with at least one sponsor.

Many of the children are from low-income neighborhoods and have not visited the Zoo with their families. "They haven't been here under this format, which involves doing their own research and their independent, creative thinking about animals," says



Above: Leon Mays answers questions about animals during a visit to Story School in Milwaukee as part of the Animal Ambassador program.

Left: Story School fifth graders Duncan Wisland (left) and Raymon Baker hold a ferret during the educational outreach program.

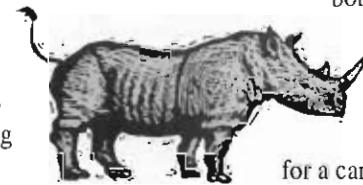
Mays. "They have to interview people at the Zoo, write stories, answer questions and do photos for a newsletter."

In a second visit to the school, Mays talks about careers working with animals: botanist, zookeeper, zoologist, etc. He may show slides of zookeepers on the job, discuss the importance of schoolwork in preparing for a career and even give children a sample job application to fill out.

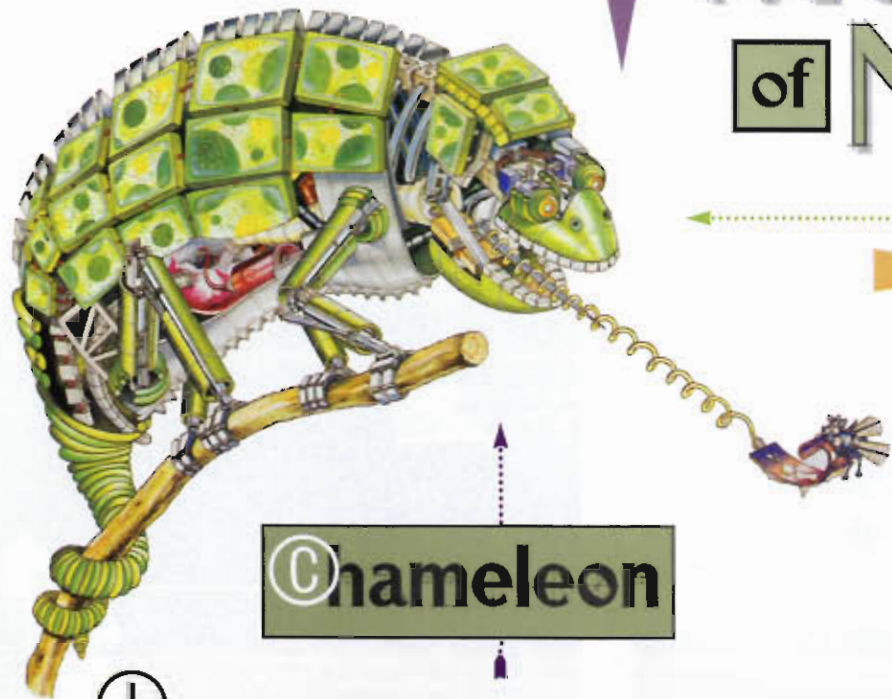
"I like to incorporate not only the science and the information about animals but also the importance of education," he explains. "I tell them that education is an opportunity and not to be taken for grant-

ed, that there are children in other countries who would die for the education that they're getting. I also tell them that by going through this program and doing the family worksheets and the other projects, they can begin to accomplish something. So it's a stepping stone for later life accomplishments."

At the end of the program, there's a graduation at the Zoo, where children are awarded medallions and certificates as official Animal Ambassadors. (This year it's May 27-30.) Each school gives its sponsors an appreciation gift, such as a book of poems or animal drawings. And the sponsors, in turn, reward each child with tickets to the Zoo for the child's whole family.



The Mechanics of Nature



Chameleon

Isaac Asimov, the master of science fiction robot stories, would love it: Show nature as a giant computer and its creatures as robotic wonders. What an idea for an exotic science exhibit: a venture into an "alternate universe," with robot animals leaping from the pages of a 1994 book into the here and now of the Milwaukee County Zoo.

What was indeed a clever idea for a book now has come to "life" as a clever idea for an animated exhibit. And lucky Milwaukee is one of the first two places in the country to premier this project that easily could star in an episode of TV's "X-Files" (remember the robotic alien cockroaches?).

On June 14, the Milwaukee County Zoo will open Ameritech's Mechanics of Nature exhibit, featuring robot animals plus a talking robot arm and a display of animal architects.

The theme is mechanization. The robot animals are part of a national, traveling exhibit called The Robot Zoo, sponsored by Silicon Graphics and *TIME Magazine*. Based on a 1994 book by the same name, The Robot Zoo is a three-dimensional display of animals

made from recognizable machine parts, such as shock absorbers and pumps, to show how their various systems — from eating to flying — actually work. The industrial robot arm performs a short skit that puts it through its paces mimicking the human arm. And the animal architects' display features animals that are mechanical "geniuses," such as beavers and weaver birds.

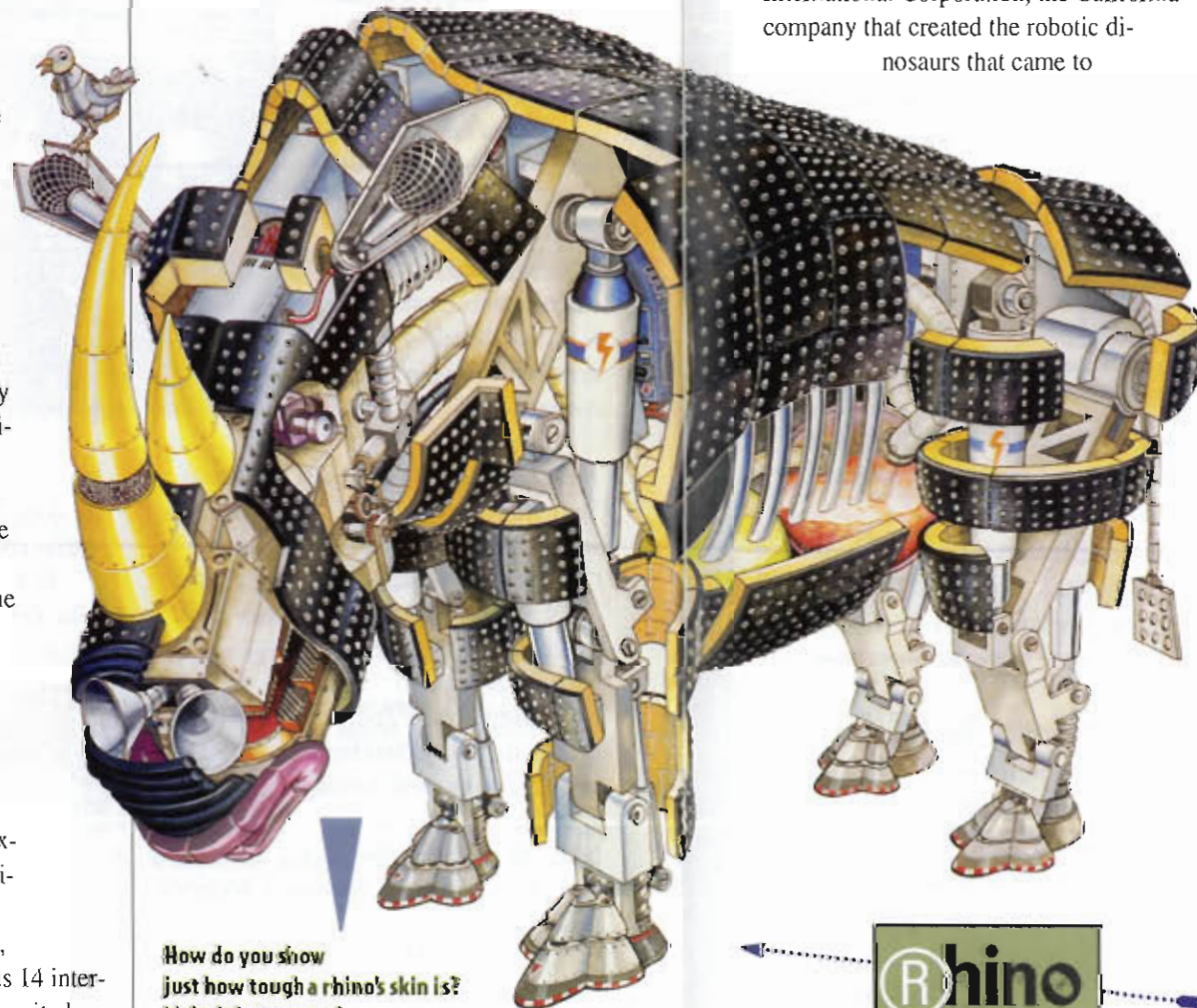
The whole exhibit will be the first display in a newly opened building donated to the Zoo by the Zoological Society, with major funding coming from the Bill Borchert Larson Family, which has supported the Zoological Society for generations (see accompanying story on page 14).

The Robot Zoo part of the exhibit is an array of eight robot animals — giraffe, rhinoceros, bat, platypus, giant squid, chameleon, grasshopper and house fly — plus 14 interactive displays that will get kids excited

A chameleon's sticky mechanical tongue catches a fly. By changing its patterns and colors, it can blend with its background.

about the science of nature.

BBH Exhibits, the San Antonio company that produced The Robot Zoo, describes it as "revealing nature's magic as master engineer. Through hands-on, 3-D computer games and activities, visitors can



How do you show just how tough a rhino's skin is? Make it into armor!

Rhino

discover how each animal is designed perfectly to fit its surroundings; for example, how powerful springs launch a grasshopper into the air, how a bat locates prey in the dark using special sonar equipment and how a giant squid uses jet propulsion and deadly weaponry as the hunter-killer submarine of the animal world."

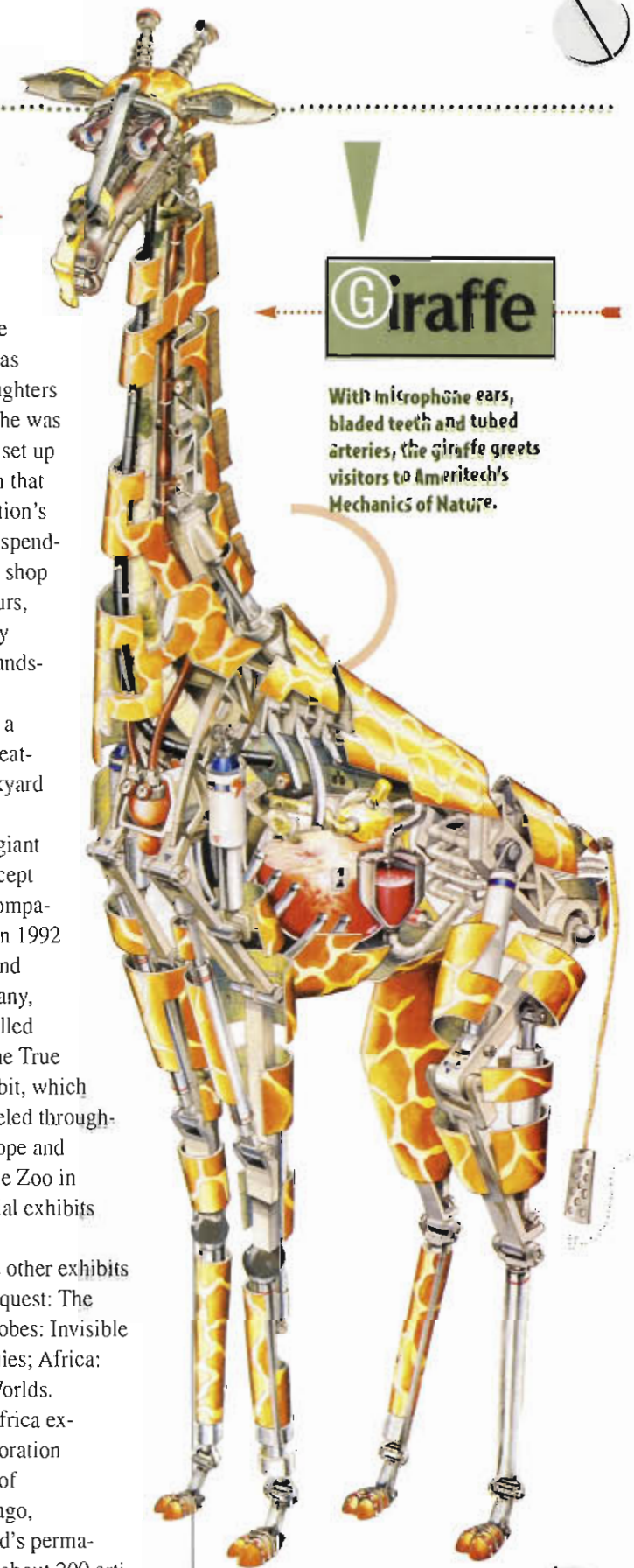
The Robot Zoo is the brainstorm of Stacy Frieden Bishkin, founder and president of BBH Exhibits. She says she was inspired by the movie "Honey, I Shrank the Kids" when she authored her first show, Backyard Monsters. That was after her term as retail director for Dinamation International Corporation, the California company that created the robotic dinosaurs that came to

Milwaukee's Zoo in 1996 and 1994.

"My first experience with museum exhibits was 1988," she says. Her daughters were ages 4 and 2, and she was doing volunteer work to set up a gift shop for a museum that was bringing in Dinamation's dinosaurs. She saw kids spending more time in the gift shop than viewing the dinosaurs, and she realized that they were hungry for more hands-on exhibits.

In 1990 she created a start-up company and created her first exhibit: Backyard Monsters: The World of Insects, which featured giant robotic insects. The concept was a success, but the company folded, she says. So in 1992 she recruited investors and launched her own company, BBH, with an exhibit called Masters of the Night, The True Story of Bats. That exhibit, which has five copies, has traveled throughout North America, Europe and Mexico and will be at the Zoo in Summer '98 in the special exhibits building.

BBH now has three other exhibits touring the world: Earthquest: The Challenge Begins; Microbes: Invisible Invaders & Amazing Allies; Africa: One Continent, Many Worlds. Bishkin notes that the Africa exhibit was done in collaboration with the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, based on one of the Field's permanent exhibits, including about 200 artifacts lent by the museum to BBH. The Robot Zoo, which is based on the book by



Giraffe

With microphone ears, bladed teeth and tubed arteries, the giraffe greets visitors to Ameritech's Mechanics of Nature.

continued on next page



John Kelly, Dr. Philip Whitfield and Obin, will be her company's fifth exhibit. She went to London to get permission from the book's British publishers for worldwide rights to the title and concepts.

Exhibits in the planning stage include Destination Deep Sea, to be created in collaboration with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and a Russian collaboration on Peter the Great.

To create an exhibit, Bishkin's company pulls together teams that include scientists, educators, people with museum backgrounds, artists, and a variety of other creative people. Her goals include creating something unusual that mixes science with entertainment.

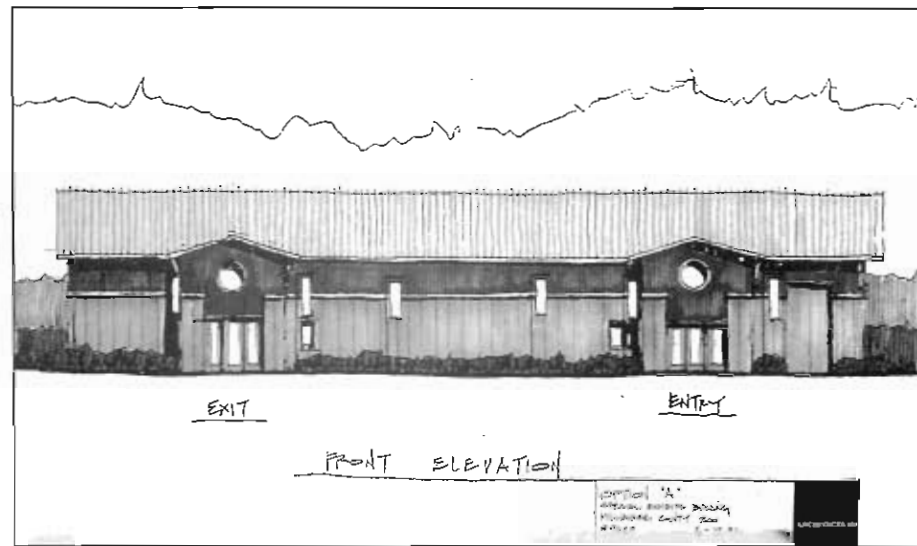
"What entices you to come to our exhibits," she says, "is that you will have a good time and you will see something that you probably hadn't seen before. When you leave, you will have learned something."

There are two copies of The Robot Zoo exhibit, and while one is in Milwaukee, the other will be at Space Center Houston, starting in May. Bishkin's company is based in San Antonio, Texas, where she and her two daughters live.

Meanwhile, another part of Ameritech's Mechanics of Nature exhibit here in Milwaukee will be an industrial robot arm made by ABB Flexible Automation of New Berlin, Wis. In a short, humorous theater skit, the LRB 2400 robot — known as Abe — and his parrot friend Eddie will lead the audience through the current-day industrial world where robots are saving humans from dangerous or monotonous jobs.

Putting together this bit of mechanized theater is O.J. Merrell, coordinator of Special Events and Special Exhibits at the Zoo. He's even hoping to get Abe to do a little dance, after Abe brags about being able to do incredibly repetitious jobs that require extreme accuracy.

Ameritech's Mechanics of Nature exhibit runs June 14 through September 14.



A TRADITION OF GIVING

Bill Borchert Larson, the grandson of Otto Borchert, owner of the original Milwaukee Brewers, wanted to honor his grandfather and continue a family tradition. So, through the Zoological Society of Milwaukee, he is donating a new building to the Zoo to house traveling exhibits.

The building, to open in May, will be named The Otto Borchert Family Special Exhibits Building. Otto Borchert was a well-known Milwaukee businessman, and few people knew of his generous, compassionate nature toward all forms of life. "As early as the first decade of this century, Grandfather made significant donations to the Zoological Society anonymously," says Bill. Those donations helped the Society purchase many animals for the Zoo.

Otto Borchert was a member of one of Milwaukee's pioneer brewing families. His grandfather, Frederick Borchert Sr., came to Milwaukee from Germany in 1848 and started a grain company that grew to be Falk, Jung and Borchert Brewery.

Otto financed boxing, billiards and baseball. The old Borchert Field ballpark was named after him. "He was famous for his kids day at the park," recalls Bill. "I like the concept of the Special Exhibits Building because I know it will be highly utilized by the school kids of Milwaukee. The building, like the Zoo itself, is for the whole community, which definitely reflects Grandfather's philosophy."

Bill has continued the family tradition of service and support to the Zoo. He was the first Platinum Patron of the Zoological Society and has been active in Zoo Pride and various Society committees. He is a longtime supporter of wildlife and conservation projects around the world.

Bill Borchert Larson's donation will pay for the construction of the 9,519-square-foot building (shown above), which includes an exhibit hall, kitchen and a patio for exhibit premiere receptions. It's located near Monkey Island in the north-central part of the Zoo. The building will house three to five traveling exhibits or activities annually. The first exhibit, Ameritech's "Mechanics of Nature," opens June 14.

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Ameritech
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The Serengeti Circle is an exclusive group of corporations and foundations who support the Zoo and Zoological Society through sponsoring special events, exhibits/attractions, programs and promotions at the \$2,500 level and above. If you would like more information on sponsorship opportunities at the Zoo, please call Paty Harrigan. (414) 258-2333.

Ronald McDonald House Charities
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Minute Maid
Twilight Safari

Marquette Medical Systems
Foundation
Animal Ambassador Program
Platypus Society Dinner

Minute Maid
Twilight Safari



NFL Alumni Association
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CNI Newspapers
Ride on the Wild Side

Mayfair Mall
Zoological Society Holiday Gift
Promotion

3rd Annual Animal Art Competition

Platypus Society



Cecil and Tricia Hawley

"Deciding to become members of the Zoological Society was an easy choice for us. Our commitment to our family and our love for animals made becoming members of the Platypus Society an obvious choice. Through our membership in the Platypus Society, we know that we have helped our community, supported our 'New Zoo,' and helped the Zoological Society achieve its mission to support, educate and conserve."

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5 year Platypus Society Member in hold (updated each fall)
+ Members who have increased their level of giving by 10% or more in 1996
* Members who have made in-kind gifts of products or services
Friends contributing to the Platypus Society after February 21, 1997 will be recognized in the next issue of ALIVE.

The Platypus Society is a group of about 400 Milwaukee-area foundations, corporations and individuals that contribute more than \$425,000 annually to the Zoological Society. If you would like to join this group in helping the Society uphold its mission of supporting the Zoo, educating the community about wildlife and the environment and conserving endangered species, call Patty Cadorin (414) 276-0843.



NEW MEMBERS

The Zoological Society welcomes the following new Platypus Society members as of February 21, 1997

PATRON I (\$1,000-\$1,499)

Robert & Sandra Koch
Donald & Kim Parker, Jr.
Saria & Roy Warshawsky

PATRON I (\$500-\$999)

Gertrude L. Abitz
Ron & Peggy Creten
Genesis Gallery
Dennis D. & Patricia L. Harton
Gina Alberts Peter
Lisa Maner & Ed Probst
William & Diana Troyk

NEW IN-KIND GIFTS

SILVER CORPORATE I
(\$2,500-\$2,999)
Hoffer Tropical Pets

NEW GIFT LEVELS

The Zoological Society thanks the following members for their increased levels of giving:

SILVER PATRON III (\$3,500-\$4,999)
R. Robert & Madeline J. Howard

SILVER PATRON I (\$2,500-\$2,999)
Foster Family Foundation
Byron & Susy Foster
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CORPORATE III (\$2,000-\$2,499)
National Business Furniture

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Mr. & Mrs. Kurt Bechthold

STEERING COMMITTEE

Richard L. Schmidt, Chairman
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Robert M. Anger
Linda L. Grunau
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Bernard J. Peck
James C. Rowe
John Sapp
Barry S. Sattell
Andrew T. Sawyer, Jr.
Judy Stathas
John Steiner
Aune Tynion



◀ Pinto horse

Stackner Heritage Farm

Arrived: October 19, 1996

Bandit the horse was well-trained and likes people, says Bonny Byal of Eagle. She and her husband, Jack, along with Jeff, Jan and Nora Kaufman of Brookfield, had jointly owned Bandit until they donated him to the Zoo last fall. "The vet diagnosed him with navicular arthritis in the front right leg. So we couldn't ride him at all or the condition would get worse," says Byal. Bandit was limping, and even running through the pasture hurt his leg. So the owners decided the best place for Bandit, age 10, was the Zoo's small barnyard, where he would be cared for but he couldn't run. Horses can live 30 years or more. Bandit is very smart and could open the Byals' barn doors, says Bonny. "We have a handle that you have to stick your fingers in and twist to open. He figured out how to do it. If he got too cold, he would just let himself into the barn and get into the grain barrels."



Holstein heifer ▶

Stackner Heritage Farm

Born: January 10, 1997

Two days before the Green Bay Packers won the NFC championship game, a calf was born to a Zoo Holstein named Kate. Fittingly, the baby was named Regina and called Reggie, after Packers star Reggie White. Although she will much outstrip him in weight as an adult (Holsteins weigh 1,200 to 1,500 pounds), baby Reggie weighed only 108 pounds, much less than Reggie White. Like football players, Reggie is a big eater: For her first six weeks, she was bottle-fed 11 pints of milk a day. Although Reggie's older sister was sold to a farmer (the Zoo has limited room for cows and no bulls), Reggie will stay at the Zoo and be milked in about two years, after she has her own calf, says Pat Lepianka, a farm attendant. Zoo visitors can see milking demonstrations daily and get a close-up look at the cows in the cow barn.



Three Livingston's Turacos ▶

Herb & Nada Mahler Family Aviary

Born September 4-6 & December 6



The Tropics Exhibit in the aviary saw the births of three Livingston Turacos this fall. "Very few are bred successfully in captivity," says Kim Smith, curator of birds. "And only a handful of zoos exhibit this species." For birds that do breed in captivity, she adds, it's not unusual for them to have births only a few months apart. Turacos are found in the wild

only in east and southeast Africa in a region stretching from central Tanzania south to Malawi. Their nests are flimsy twig platforms, and they lay two whitish eggs that hatch in 21 to 24 days. The birds are known for their bright green heads (the green pigment is named Turaco verdin), crimson wing feathers and long tails. These arboreal forest creatures eat primarily fruit and vegetation, with some insects. Turacos usually are seen in pairs, and both sexes look alike.



◀ Woodchuck/Groundhog

Stackner Heritage Farm

Arrived: January 14, 1997

Wanda, the Zoo's new groundhog, barely poked her head out of her hut on February 2, her first Groundhog Day. She was shy about the crowd waiting for her to appear. She did not see her shadow, which is supposed to mean that winter will be short. Not even a year old, Wanda came to Milwaukee from the Willis Zoo in Brandon, Wis. More commonly called a woodchuck, groundhogs also are known as

marmots. They spend more than half of their lives asleep, hibernating from late September through the winter. But they do wake up to excrete waste (and to peek out on Groundhog Day, if encouraged). When a woodchuck hibernates, it breathes only once every six minutes and its temperature falls from 96.8 to 39.2 degrees. Woodchucks live in burrows, where they mate in spring and, within a month, produce two to six young.



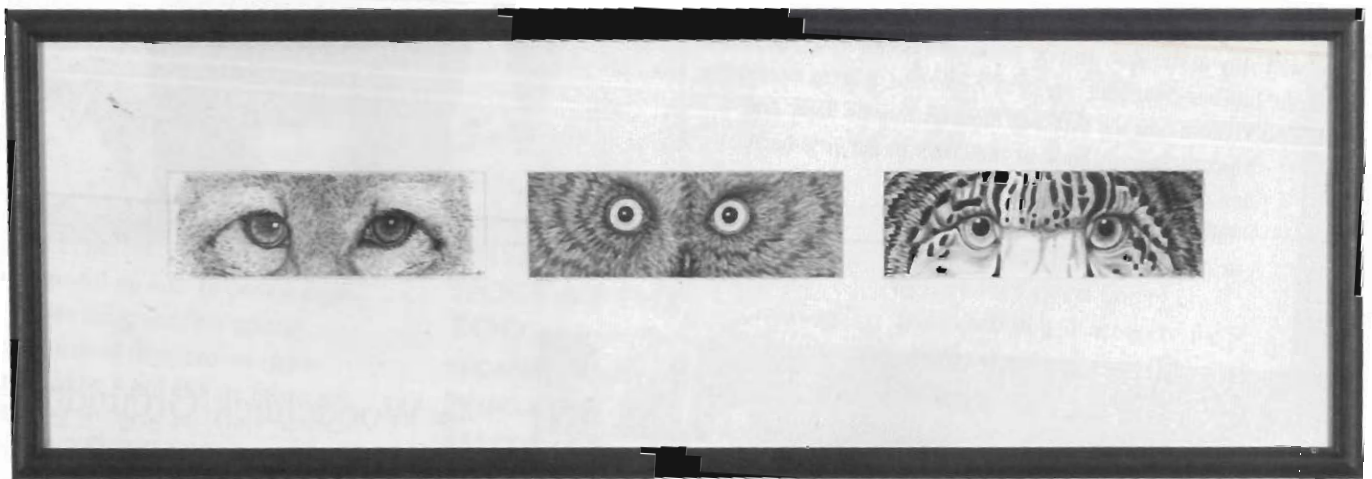
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Don't miss a chance to vote for your favorite artwork depicting endangered species. See artwork from area college students at this year's Third Annual Animal People's Choice Art Competition at Mayfair Mall in Wauwatosa **May 28-June 10, 1997.**

**Second Annual Animal
People's Choice
Art Competition**

"The Eyes of Extinction," a pen and ink drawing featuring just the eyes of a cougar, a snow leopard and an owl, was one of four top award winners in the Zoological Society's Second Annual Animal People's Choice Art Competition.

**By Pattie Schey
Mount Mary College**