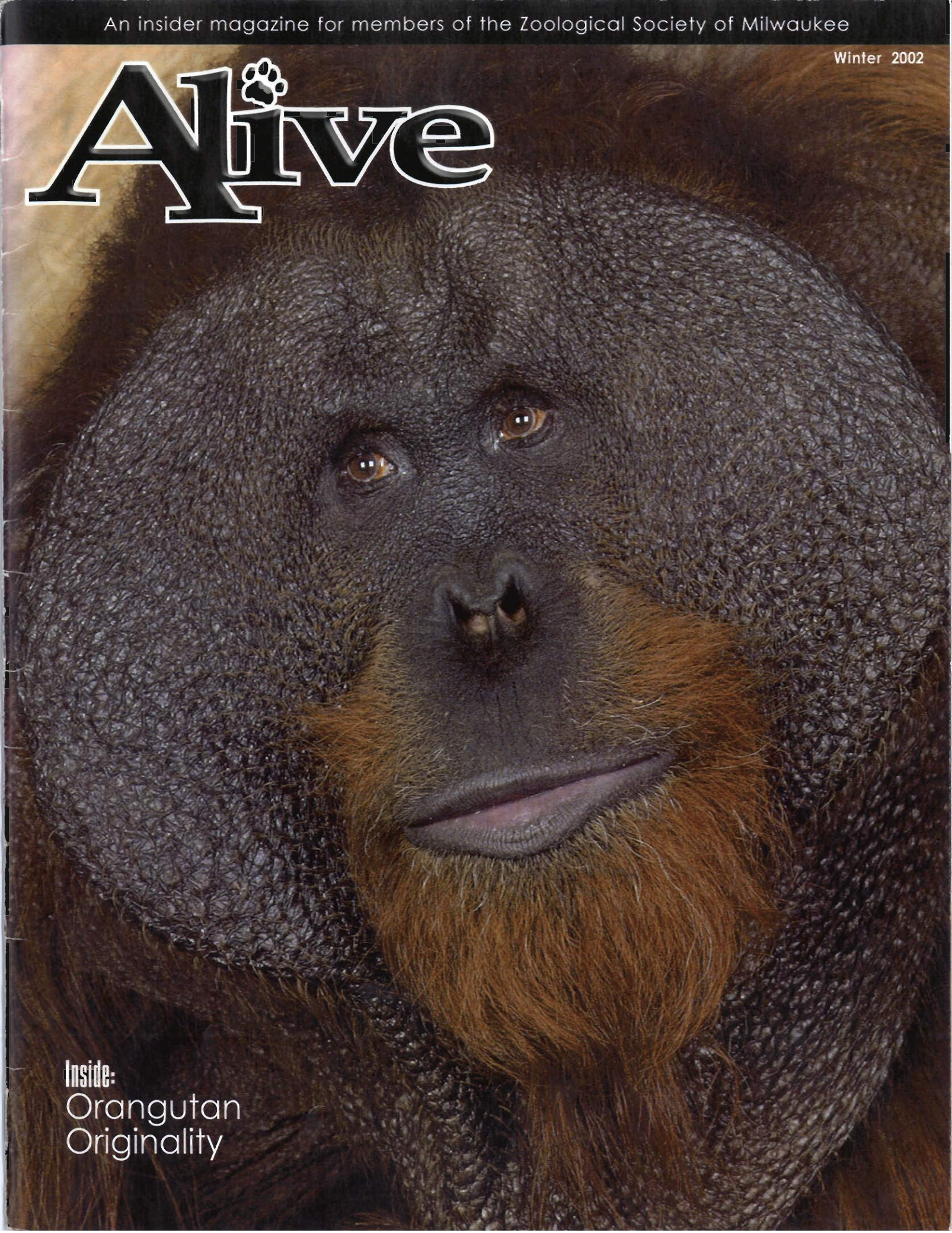


An insider magazine for members of the Zoological Society of Milwaukee

Winter 2002

# Alive

Inside:  
Orangutan  
Originality





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



The past year has been a difficult one. The need to reflect on the events of 2001, while continuing to carry on with our everyday lives, has presented a challenge to all of us. The Zoological Society is moving forward, and we continue to need your support with our mission 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.

In our ongoing effort to get our visitors closer to the animals and create a barrier-free Zoo, we are renovating Monkey Island. If we can reach our \$415,000 fund-raising goal in the next few months, we can provide a much more interesting island equipped with enrichment "toys" for the Japanese macaques that live on the island. Renovation plans include a modern indoor facility for the monkeys that will make it easier for keepers to check the animals' health. For Zoo visitors, there will be a covered deck providing a new perspective on the island. This exhibit renovation can happen only with your help. Our membership is a vital component of our ability to create a better environment for the macaques. If each member would contribute just \$10, we would exceed our goal! For people who contribute \$100 or more to our Annual Appeal, we are offering a one-time-only chance to go behind the scenes on a hard-hat tour of the new indoor facility (that will not be on public view). We would like to thank all of our members who already have responded to our appeal. Read more about this exciting project on page 8.

Coming Feb. 11 to the Otto Borchert Family Special Exhibits Building is a traveling exhibit on the mysterious world of big and small cats. Firststar's Cats! Wild to Mild will explore cat myths, conservation of endangered wild cats, the human-cat relationship and why cats are America's No. 1 pet. The Zoological Society, the Milwaukee County Zoo, Firststar and the Wisconsin Humane Society all are helping bring this exhibit to the Zoo. Read about this museum-quality exhibit and our own Zoo's cats on page 4. Zoological Society members get to preview Firststar's Cats! Wild to Mild in a special premiere before it opens to the public. Look for your invitation for Feb. 9 or 10 in this package with *Alive* magazine.

As you know, bringing all of these exhibits to you takes time and funding. We appreciate your continuing support as we strive to give you the best wildlife experience we can provide.

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

# Alive

VOLUME 22, ISSUE 1  
WINTER JANUARY - MARCH 2002

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Prowl through the warm indoors at the Zoo this winter to view our amazing cots and to see a remarkable touring exhibit: Firststar's Cats! Wild to Mild. Learn about the mysteries, myths and almost magical nature of felines.
- 8 Monkeying With Monkey Island  
Play's the thing for the snow monkeys on Monkey Island. But you won't find them in the snow this winter. They're indoors waiting for remodeling to be done to create new play areas on their island and a new, healthful indoor home. The Zoological Society's Annual Appeal is raising money for the monkeys' new digs.
- 16 Live Animals Star  
It's one of the most popular education programs run by the Zoological Society, and it reaches thousands of people throughout Wisconsin each year. It's Care for Critters. Thanks to Roundy's Pick'n Save, these Care for Critters programs are presented free.
- 18 Orangutan Originality  
They're clever, challenging and completely unconcerned about whether they please anyone or not. Their human-like eyes may be why they got the nickname "person of the forest." But their forests are disappearing, and these great apes are facing extinction.

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## Kids alive

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## On the cover

Tommy the orangutan



Visit our newly remodeled Web site in mid-January for more information about the Zoological Society. [www.zoosociety.org](http://www.zoosociety.org)

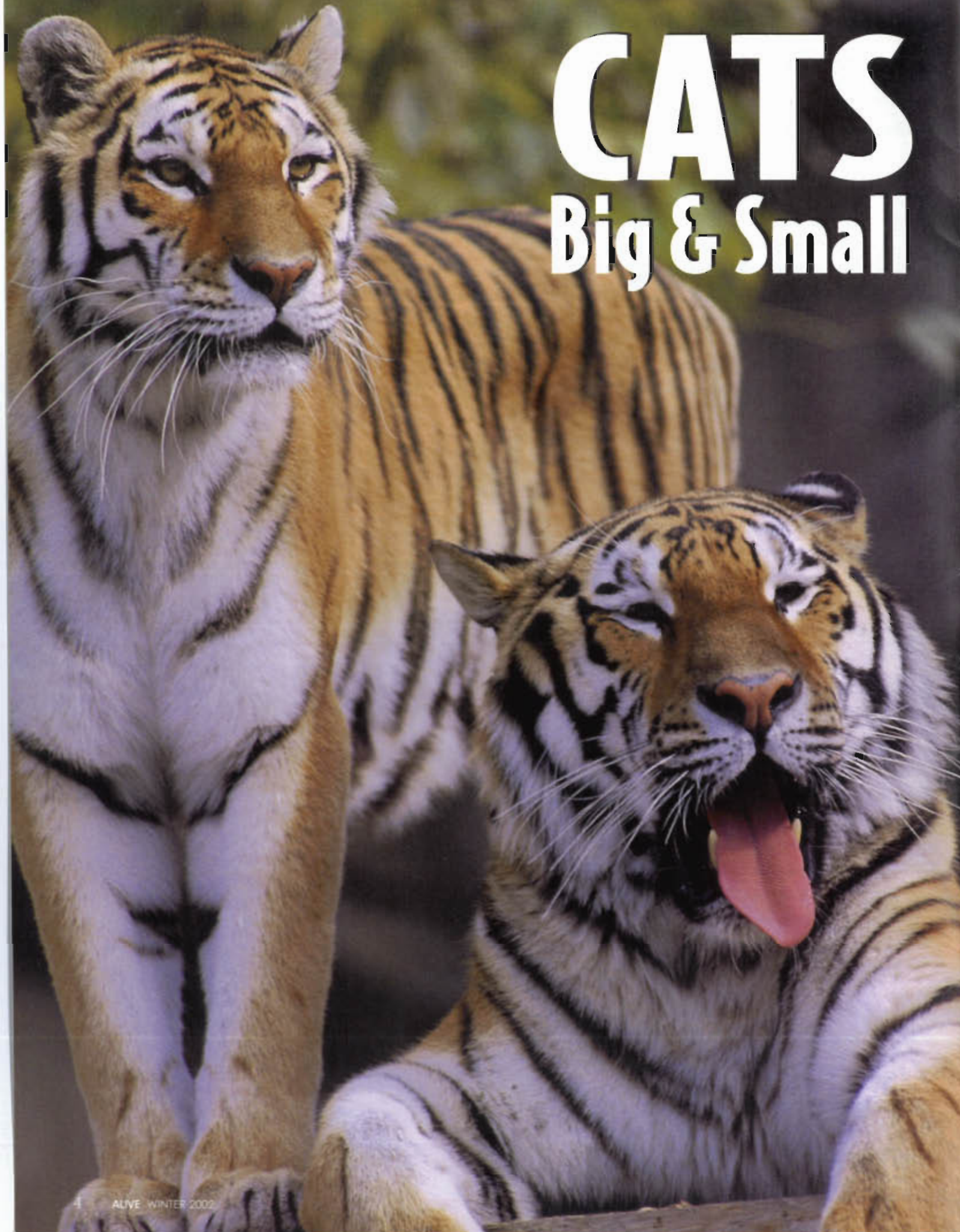


Sheena the Siberian tiger



# CATS

## Big & Small



BY FRAN BAUER

The tabby cat that may be dozing on your bed is really a study in miniature of the lions, leopards and other big cats that still roam wild. Learn more about the world of cats in the touring exhibit Firststar's

footed cat, which is in the Small Mammals Building. (See box for list of Zoo's cats.) The caracal and the larger cougar each have their own genus. "A fundamental distinction between the

big cats of the genus *Panthera* and the small cats..." according to Dr. David Macdonald in *The Encyclopedia of Mammals*, "is that the big cats can roar but cannot purr whereas the small cats can purr continuously but cannot roar."

Firststar's Cats! Wild to Mild uses what we know about our pets to teach some little-known facts about their wild cousins. All of us have watched cats wash themselves.



A diorama of lions is part of the fascinating exhibit.

Cats! Wild to Mild. It opens at the Milwaukee County Zoo Feb. 11.

Cats are now the favorite pet of Americans. "People get excited about cats because they have domesticated ones right in their own homes," says Valerie Werner, who has worked as a zookeeper in the Feline Building at the Zoo for 23 years. She says it's common to overhear visitors saying, "Doesn't that tiger remind you of the cat we have at home?"

Their size is one of the biggest differences between a domesticated cat and the five species of "big cats" in the Feline

Building: African lion, cheetah, jaguar, Siberian tiger, and snow leopard. The house cat actually is in the same small-cat category (genus) as the Zoo's African black-

But did you know that the sandpaper-like surface of their tongues enables cats to lick meat off the bones of their prey and wash themselves clean of any loose hair and fleas? Licking also helps water-



The Zoo's two cougars: Colleen and Rocky. Top: African black-footed cat.

proof their coats and even cools their bodies as the saliva evaporates.

The exhibit also offers tips on keeping pet cats healthy, since one of every

## Members First

Zoological Society members get to see Firststar's



Cats! Wild to Mild in a special premiere before it opens to the public. Look for your invitation for Feb. 9 or 10 in this package with *Alive* magazine.



The Zoological Society, the Milwaukee County Zoo and Firststar all helped bring this exhibit to the Zoo.

four households in the U.S. now has a cat. And you can interact with live domestic cats thanks to a program by the Wisconsin Humane Society - all indoors in the Zoo's Otto Borchert Family Special Exhibits

Building. The exhibit also demonstrates why it is so important to spay or neuter your cat. As an electronic graph shows, just one non-neutered female cat has the potential to produce up to 30,000 cats in just two years!

This highly praised big cat-small cat exhibit, developed with a grant from the

National Science Foundation, was created at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. The exhibit gives you insights into cat biology and behavior.

continued on next page >

< The Zoo's two Siberian tigers: Sheena and Kajmak >





Ancient Maya leaders wore jaguar costumes.


then traces how cats became domesticated. You discover how serious the situation is for endangered cats and how zoos have developed Species Survival Plans for them.

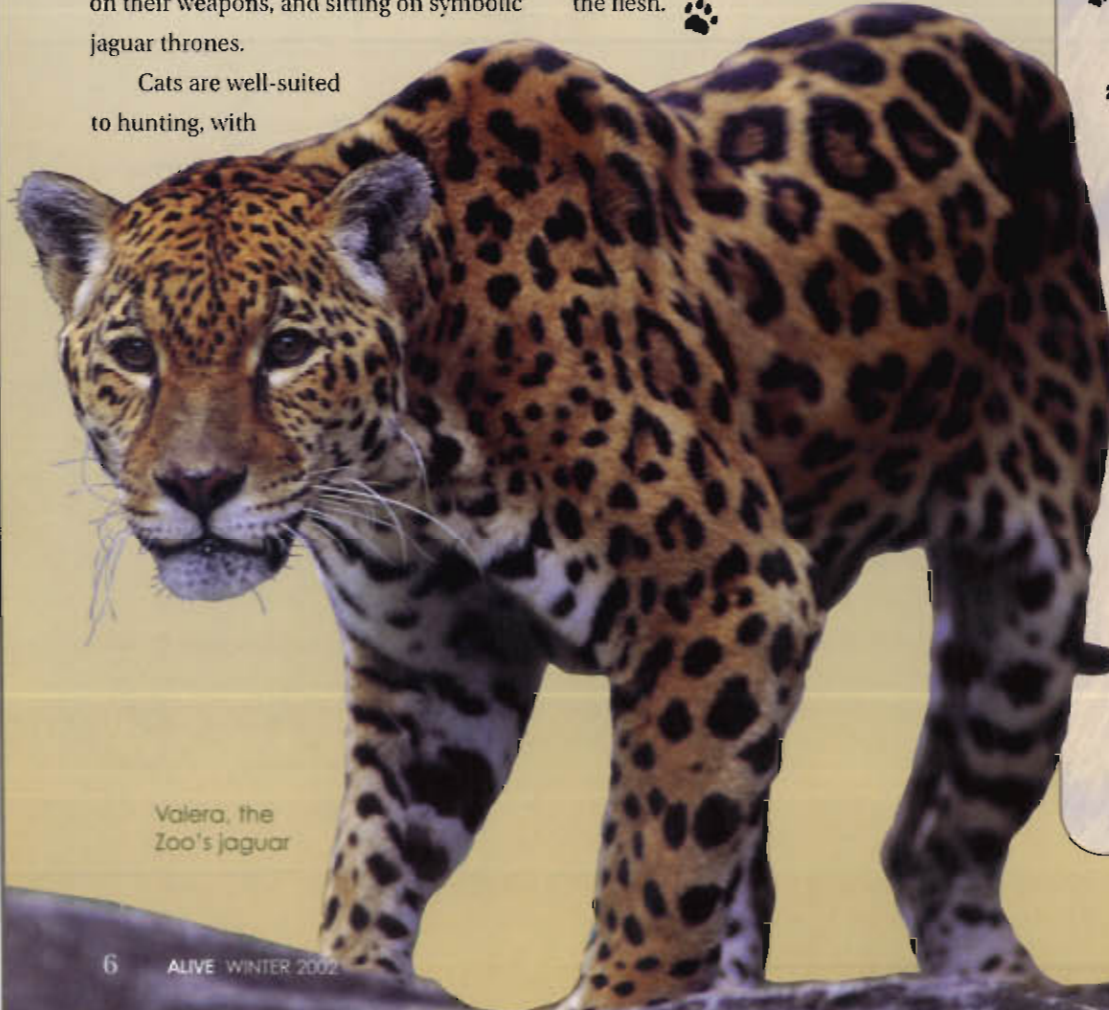
As you enter the exhibit, you'll be greeted by a warrior dressed as a mystical jaguar, just as he would have been in Central and South America in the pre-Columbian era thousands of years ago. The jaguar was venerated and feared for its ability as a hunter. So it was common for hunters, warriors, shaman and Maya rulers to adopt the cat's power by wearing its pelts, using its name, bearing its image on their weapons, and sitting on symbolic jaguar thrones.

Cats are well-suited to hunting, with

terrific camouflage, night vision, extremely sensitive whiskers and keen hearing (picking up sounds most humans cannot detect). You can compare the fast-paced cheetah's unusually flexible backbone to skeletons of a human and of a domestic cat. You can manipulate a model of a lion's forearm to understand how the cat uses its claws to catch and hold prey.

Also legendary is a cat's ability to land on its feet, no matter how far it falls. What you may not know is that cats can break their bones if they fall more than 20 feet. A video in the exhibit follows a cat in an electrifying fall, catching the extreme flexibility of its backbone as it turns its body 180 degrees to land upright.








Zookeeper Werner hopes you'll head from the touring exhibit to the Feline Building to see the wild cats in the flesh. 




Valera, the Zoo's jaguar

## All the Zoo's Cats


### Feline Building

-  2 African lions: Amon Ra (male), 16, & Sasha (female), 15
-  2 caracals: Mary (female) & Percy (male), both about age 4; the three kittens born in 2001 have gone to other zoos.
-  3 cheetahs: Ace, Juba & Onyx (male triplets), age 11
-  2 cougars: Rocky (male), 8, & Colleen (female), 7
-  1 jaguar: Valera (female), 19
-  2 Siberian tigers: Kajmak (male), 6, & Sheena (female), 15
-  2 snow leopards: Tankh (male) & Tami (female), siblings age 1½


### Small Mammals Building

-  1 African black-footed cat: Rosie (female), 3

### Stackner Heritage Farm

-  3 domestic cats: Eddie, 4; Oliver, 2; Simon, 2 (all male)

### Zoo Commissary

-  1 domestic cat: Baby

To sponsor one of these cats, call (414) 258-2333

# What One Dollar Will Do

This is part of a series of stories on how people help the Zoo through the Zoological Society.

BY PAULA BROOKMIRE

Children form a special bond with a Milwaukee County Zoo animal when they help pay for the animal's care. That's just what 184 seventh graders from an Oshkosh school did.

When school classes donate \$100 or more to our Sponsor an Animal program, they get a special presentation from a zookeeper. The eight sections of seventh graders at Carl Traeger Middle School in Oshkosh collected \$1 to \$1.25 per student and donated \$200 last fall. So on Oct. 23, 2001, they came to the Zoo to hear from zookeepers Mike Hoffmann and Chris John.

The students met Chukchi, the female polar bear, and Jade, a male snow leopard – two of the animals the classes had sponsored. They were excited to learn from Hoffmann that Chukchi might be pregnant. They were amazed at how much she eats: 15 to 20 pounds of food each day, including a pound of lard to make up for the seal blubber she would eat in the wild.

And they were surprised that if this 650-pound bear has a cub, it will weigh only 1 pound at birth. About Jade, they wanted to know if it was dangerous to go into his exhibit. Chris John said that several raccoons that had ventured into the leopards' exhibits were found dead. So he wouldn't go into the exhibit. (Jade died in November.)

Students also were surprised to find that in fall and winter it's easier to see the animals up close because the Zoo is not so crowded.

All animal sponsors receive background information about their animals. So the children already knew a lot about their sponsored animals before they arrived at the Zoo. "That's what we used for science and social studies lessons beforehand," says Debbie Hilscher, a seventh-grade teacher who, with colleague Vicki Ramus, has organized their classes' sponsorship of Zoo animals for the last three years. "In Social Studies, they do some mapping. So they understand what

the animal's lifestyle is like in its natural habitat. Then they compared the natural habitat to the Zoo habitat. They thought that the Zoo tried to simulate the habitat as best it could, especially with the lions, tigers and polar bears."

As a follow-up to their Zoo visit, the classes will create miniature animal habitats in shoeboxes. They are encouraged to focus on the animals that they are sponsoring, including a koala, Siberian tiger, Humboldt penguin, cheetahs and a golden lion tamarin.

Carl Traeger School is one of 31 schools and youth groups that sponsor our Zoo's animals. Their sponsorships help pay for upgrading animal exhibits and maintaining quality habitats for the animals. Any group can sponsor an animal at the Zoo. For more information about the benefits of sponsorship, call Mandy Hart at the Zoological Society, (414) 258-2333.

Mike Hoffmann answers questions about Chukchi the polar bear from Oshkosh students who sponsor Chukchi. The bear was in a behind-the-scenes facility so children could see her up close.





# Monkeying With Monkey Island

BY PAULA BROOKMIRE

Ring the bell! The monkeys sure will. The favorite bell of the snow monkeys on Monkey Island will be restored to working order and other noisemakers will be added when the remodeled exhibit opens in June. That's only part of the fun.

The Zoo's 27 Japanese macaques – whose native habitat is in snow-covered mountains of Japan – will get a higher mountain with more nooks and crannies, two waterfalls,

shrubs and mounds that they can hide behind, more “fallen” trees to play on, vines to swing from and an even more natural-looking island. Indoors the monkeys will enjoy a healthful new home with pools and plenty of “toys.” And Zoo visitors will discover a new covered overlook that gives a great view of the remodeled island.

Gone is the old A-frame, 1950s-style glass building. It had served as an indoor space for the monkeys, with a basement underneath for monkey health exams. Replacing it will be a covered deck for zoo-goers in front of three fairly large, modern rooms for the animals, a kitchen-service

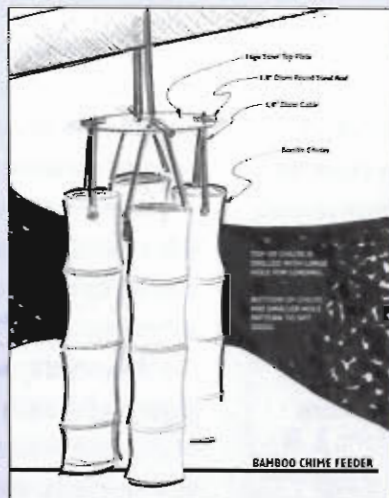
area and – after a half-century – a wash-room for the zookeepers.

This remodeled exhibit, made possible by the Zoological Society's Annual Appeal, opens June 15. Society members will get a pre-view during Nights in June, June 12-14. The indoor area for the monkeys will not be on view to the public because the site did not have enough room for public corridors. But people who donate \$100 or more to the Annual Appeal for Monkey Island by April 15 will get an exclusive, one-

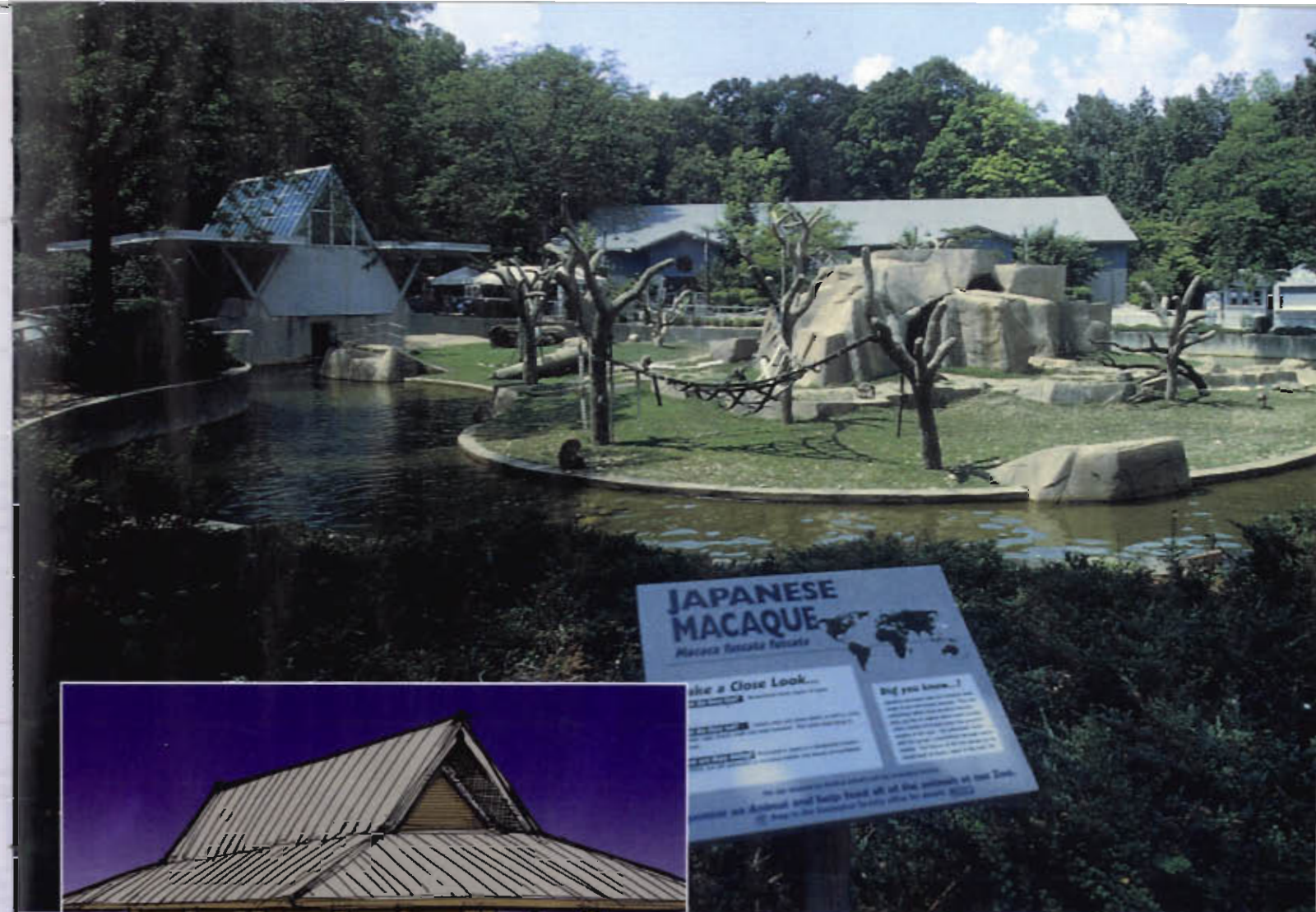
time-only tour of the facility May 4 or 5, before the monkeys go back into the exhibit. Temporary construction walls around Monkey Island will give them time to adjust to their new habitat before it opens to the public.

The Zoological Society has contracted with Mike Graff, an industrial designer from Port Washington, to come up with some more natural-looking enrichment devices for the island (as opposed to the old fire hose and plastic balls). One idea is a jumping platform embedded in existing gunite rocks. It would have a hammer inside that pounds against a piece of sheet metal when a monkey jumps on the platform. Monkeys love to make noise as a display of dominance.

Another item would be a wind chime made of bamboo pipes that have food such as nuts inside. If the monkeys bang the pipes together, not only do the pipes make noise, but seeds fall out for the



Mike Graff designed this inexpensive bamboo chime feeder from a zookeeper idea.



Last summer Monkey Island looked like this, with the old A-frame indoor facility (background). The A-frame is being replaced by the covered overlook at left (tentative design).

The new indoor area for the monkeys

they do in the moat around the island. They'll have plenty of “enrichment” devices to play with. And, best of all, they'll have a constant source of nutritional food pellets flowing out of six indoor feeding chutes.

“In the past, keepers spread out the food twice a day, and we couldn't tell if each animal got what it needed,” says Rafert. “The geese [that fly onto the island] got some of their food. If the monkeys have free access to a continual-flow food supply, each animal should get what it needs. We'll have six feeders, two per room. No one animal is going to be able to control any area and deny access to anyone else.” And, no, they won't get fat,

animals to eat. That's monkey heaven: making noise and eating in one fell swoop. A similar combination of noise-making and food is proposed for a log-like stump that the monkeys would shake and out would come seeds as mallets hit a steel bar inside the stump.

“It has been an awesome challenge trying to create inexpensive items for primates that have the strength of Hercules, the mentality of a 2- or 3-year-old and the problem-solving ability of most adult humans,” says Graff. They have all day to sit and think of ways to break their “enrichment” toys.

has many advantages, says primates curator Jan Rafert. All the rooms and corridors will have windows into each other. “As the animals get acclimated to keepers on the other side of the glass, keepers will get closer individual inspection of the monkeys to see if they have wounds,” he says. “It should help build up a stronger trust between the animals and the keepers because the animals can see what keepers are doing at all times. Nothing comes as a surprise.”

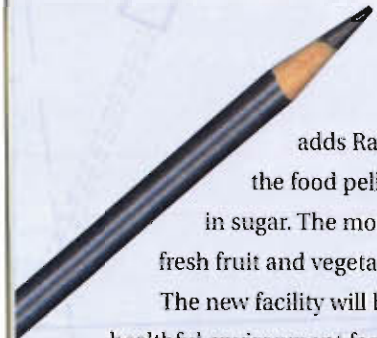
Each of the three monkey rooms in the new facility will have a pool of water for the monkeys to dip in their food, as



Two Japanese macaques ring the Monkey Island bell, under which is buried Old Joe, the patriarch of this primate clan.

continued on next page >





adds Rafert, because the food pellets are not high in sugar. The monkeys also get fresh fruit and vegetables daily.

The new facility will be a more healthful environment for the monkeys. It's designed to be less stressful, with better room arrangement and a way to separate monkeys that need special care. It will be much easier to give the macaques physical exams and medication with this more modern facility. That's because the main access tunnel between the island and the indoor facility allows the keepers to select specific monkeys that may need individual exams or injections, says Rafert.

The area also will be a more efficient and pleasant environment for the zookeepers. Windows into every room allow them to observe all of the monkeys, even when keepers are working in the kitchen area preparing food. It also allows more modern ways of handling the animals, for the safety of both zookeepers and monkeys.

Since September, the macaques have resided in the Zoo's Hospital, in five rooms. Trish Khan, primate area supervisor, says that all the primate keepers are eager to get the monkeys into their new indoor home. It will be fun to watch them discover the changes and their new "toys" on the island, too. 🐾



Primate area supervisor Trish Khan meets with designer Mike Graff at the Zoo to discuss animal enrichment devices he has been working on with the help of the keepers.

To contribute to the Annual Appeal and help remodel Monkey Island, call (414) 258-2333 about making a tax-deductible donation or send in the envelope inserted in the center of *Alive*.



# Kids Alive

[www.zoosociety.org](http://www.zoosociety.org)



## Wild White Sheep

## Colorful Birds in the Snow

Have you heard the expression "proud as a peacock?" Look at the Indian peacocks strutting around the Milwaukee County Zoo, showing off their fancy feathers. They hold their crowned heads high, as if they know you're looking. But it's the peahens' eyes they really want to catch. The peacocks are the males, and, like many males in the animal world, are more colorful. Their shiny blue necks and chests, and blue-green heads with white eye patches are set off by a beautiful fan of feathers.



When peacocks fan their colorful feathers, the plain brown peahens are attracted. "The bigger the fan the better, as far as peahens are concerned," says Kim Smith, the Zoo's curator of birds. "The bigger, stronger peacocks usually stake out the prime territories for their show." They look for open spaces (such as the elk and moose yards) where a lot of peahens can see them.

There were 37 peafowl on the Zoo grounds last fall, says Smith, and the hearty birds stay out all winter. They roam free, making striking calls. If one ever flies off the Zoo grounds, keepers go to collect it. The peafowl are part of the Zoo's collection, and keepers give them food, medical care and shelter from the wind.



- Sandra Whitehead

On your winter visits to the Zoo, make sure to see the majestic Dall sheep in their spiffy new exhibit that looks like a mountaintop. The Zoo's flock of four (one male, four females) likes to rest on the slopes. Dall sheep are the only all-white wild sheep in the world. These graceful, agile animals have good traction on rocky terrain. In the wild they live in the mountains of Alaska and northwestern Canada. They paw through snow to browse on dry, frozen grasses and sedges. To balance their diet, they travel long distances to eat dirt at "licks," sites rich in minerals. Their hair is hollow, which insulates their body.



Dall sheep are known for their magnificent curved horns. These spiral horns are made out of keratin, the same substance as human fingernails. The horns take eight years to reach full size. The males, called rams, have large, heavy horns that determine their place in the ram hierarchy. The females have shorter, more slender horns. The horns stop growing in the winter, resulting in a grooved rest line. Like tree rings, these lines can be used to determine the age of the sheep.

- Mary Kogler



# North American Animals

## Bears & Hibernation

In summer, the Zoo's young Alaskan brown bears, Aurora and Borealis, play a lot (see photo at left). In winter they go to sleep for months. That's called hibernation. When it starts to get cold, bears stop eating and go into a den. It's usually in a protected place, like a cave. Here they hibernate, living mainly off the fat they built up in summer.

Some experts claim that bears don't really hibernate because it's easy to wake them, among other reasons. Other experts say bears DO hibernate because their heart rate (the "beating" of the heart) drops to less than half of normal and other changes occur in their bodies. Whatever it is called, this sleep period begins sometime in October, November or December and ends in March, April

or May. The exact time depends on the location, weather and condition of the animal. At the Milwaukee County Zoo, our American black bears, grizzly bears and brown bears usually "den" in winter. You will find our polar bears, Zero and Chukchi, outdoors playing in their pool, however.

## Badger

The badger is the state animal of Wisconsin. It is short and squat, but it has powerful jaws and long claws. A great digger, the badger burrows a den into a hillside. Badgers eat gophers and other pests in farming areas. The Zoo's badger is Scarlet (see picture above).



## Caribou

Caribou (called reindeer in Europe) are in the deer family. Their soft fur is hollow, insulated and sheds water and snow. They are herd animals always on the move, and they can sleep in water. Both males and females

have antlers. As of last fall, the Zoo had four caribou: Barry, Larry, Ronda and Sally.



## North American Elk

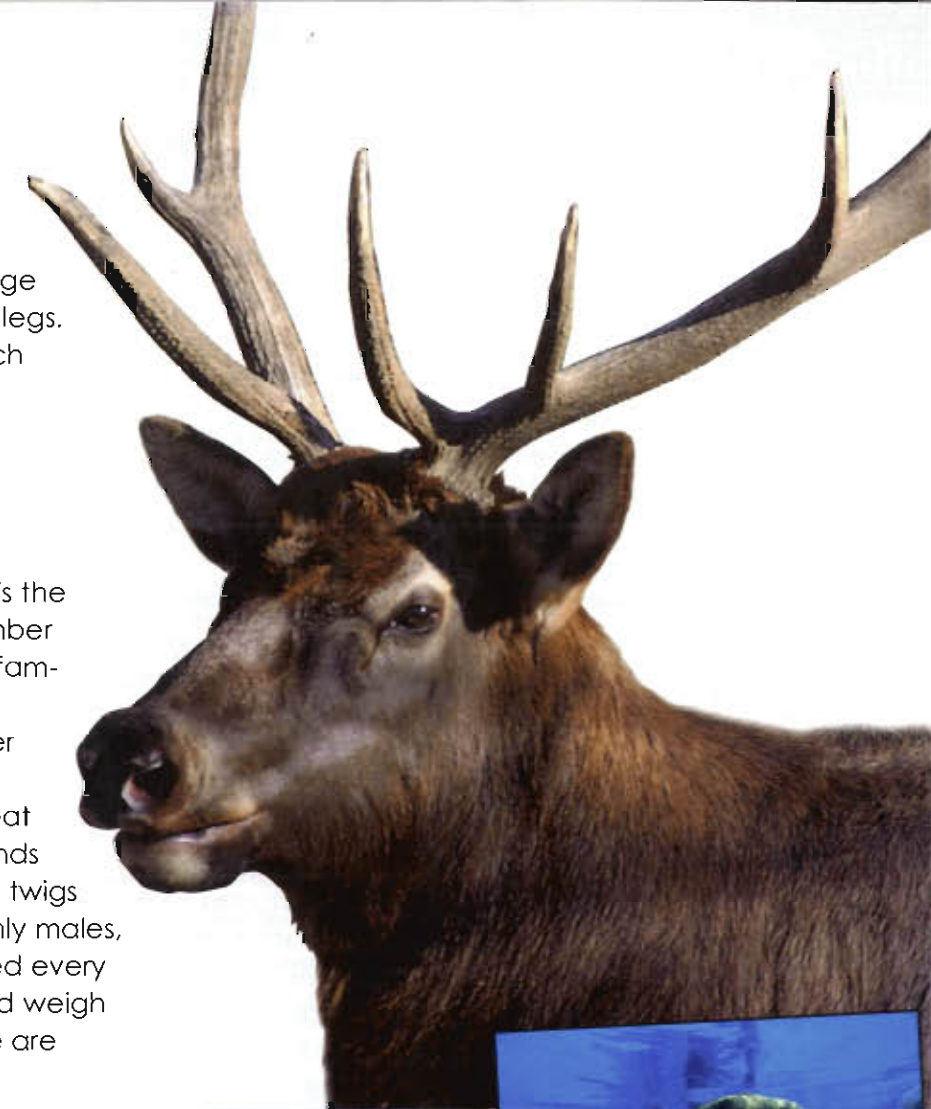
The North American elk is called wapiti (white) by some Indian tribes because of its white rump. The elk (at right) is a large deer with a thick body and long slender legs. Males have huge spreading antlers, which can weigh up to 40 pounds. The Zoo has four elk.



## Moose

The moose is the largest member of the deer family. Its name means "eater of twigs." A moose can eat up to 60 pounds of leaves and twigs every day. Only males,

called bulls, have antlers, which they shed every year. Antlers can grow to 5 feet wide and weigh up to 50 pounds (see above left). Moose are powerful swimmers.



## Guess the Animal

Fill in the blanks below to spell the names of the animals on pages 11, 12 and 13.

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Answers: Badger, black bear, peacock, brown bear, caribou, polar bear, moose, grizzly bear, elk, sheep, goat.

## Connect-the-Dots Animal

Discover the North American animal above by drawing lines between each dot in order, starting from No. 1.



## Marine-Mammal Quest

Name this marine mammal that swims along the coast of California and uses its front flippers for propulsion. It has visible earflaps.

Name this marine mammal that swims along both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of North America. It propels itself using its rear flipper and has no external ears.

Answer to Coral-Reef Quest, October 2001: Turkeyfish



# Adventure in Belize



She doesn't wear a hat like Indiana Jones or drive a magic school bus like Miss Frizzle. Still, Kerry Scanlan is the kind of teacher who knows how to handle an adventure, even one with hurricane-like weather.

Scanlan, the Zoological Society's community program coordinator, spent a week in the Central American country of Belize last August. Her goal? Help schoolteachers learn to teach avian science (the study of birds) to children. She was leading a conference sponsored by the Zoological Society of Milwaukee and the Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, Inc. (FWC), in cooperation with the Belize Zoo.

She thought she was prepared for everything, but she didn't expect to encounter Tropical Storm Chantal. Not long after arriving, she had to evacuate the area and move inland, to the city of Belmopan, 30 miles away.

When the storm let up, Scanlan returned to her headquarters near the Belize Zoo, a research station for Birds Without Borders-Aves Sin Fronteras<sup>SM</sup> (BWB-ASF). This joint project of the Zoological Society and the FWC studies birds in Belize and Wisconsin. The project also educates people about birds and promotes conservation. Scanlan is education coordinator of BWB-ASF.

With the roads bad and a bridge washed out, Scanlan and the Belizean conference leaders quickly drew up a new plan: Postpone the conference for a day. Cancel an overnight trip to a research station four hours away and visit a closer station instead. Despite the still-treacherous conditions, 21 teachers from across Belize came to the conference. The first day they toured the Belize Zoo and went bird-watching. Then Scanlan learned that the next day's field trip wouldn't work. Roads were impassable.

Ready for bird-watching: Kerry Scanlan

"Scrambled to make arrangements to stay at Chaa Creek's River Camp, only a 45-minute drive. Whew!" she wrote in her journal. So at 5:30 the next morning, she and the other teachers went bird-watching at Chaa Creek Nature Preserve, sang songs around a campfire and went on a night hike.

After such a busy day, Scanlan went to bed and fell fast asleep. Right? Wrong. "After removing two scorpions, a 3-inch cockroach and two wolf spiders the size of my hand, I turned in - but first wrapped my extra shirt around my head. Somehow it made me feel more comfortable."



Tarantula

The conference continued one more day with the other leaders, but Scanlan had to catch her flight back to Milwaukee. "The workshop got teachers excited and had an impact on them," Scanlan said. After learning about birds firsthand, they drew up lesson plans to teach children. "This is real-world science."

Real science, real scorpions and a real impact. What more could a teacher want?

- Kathy Mangold

The Serengeti Circle is an exclusive group of corporations and foundations that support the Zoo and Zoological Society through grants and sponsorship of special events, exhibits/attractions, educational and conservation programs and promotions at the \$2,500 level and above. For more information on sponsorship opportunities at the Zoo, please call Patty Harrigan, (414) 302-9485.

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Tri City National Bank has sponsored the Zoological Society's Beastly Bowl-a-Thon fundraiser since 1996. It's a popular event for families and some companies. This year's bowl-a-thon is Feb. 23 at AMF Bowlero Lanes in Wauwatosa. For more information, call Julie B. at (414) 258-2333 or look for the flyer inserted with your Alive package.

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# Live Animals Star



"It's wonderful to be able to teach what you love."

Cathy Spahn

BY FRAN BAUER

In an instant, this group of giggly third graders falls silent as a woman steps out from behind a screen with a golden eagle poised proudly on her wrist. The bird is close enough to touch, though naturalist Cathy Spahn has asked the youths not to make any sudden moves that might frighten the show's birds and small animals. The students are spellbound, seeing up close the eagle that most people see only from a distance.

Welcome to Care for Critters, a free, 45-minute program that brings animals from the wild into classrooms, libraries, and festivals, thanks to the sponsorship of Roundy's Pick'n Save.

Cathy Spahn and the other naturalists who present programs actually work for the World Bird Sanctuary in St. Louis. The Zoological Society of Milwaukee asked the sanctuary 17 years ago to offer a summer raptor education program on Zou grounds. It was a first, and is now the longest running program the sanctuary offers. Also sponsored by Roundy's Pick'n Save, the Birds of Prey program became so popular that the Zoological Society came up with the idea of bringing a live-animal program into the community, in schools, libraries, etc. Thus, Roundy's Pick'n Save's Care for Critters program was

born in 1994 and now travels year-round.

The popularity of the program has grown, and there is little time off for the Care for Critters staff. Working in teams, pairs of the naturalists put on as many as four shows a day, every day of the week. When not out on the road, the naturalists are busy training and caring for their animal performers, or researching new animals that might make interesting additions to their show.

For example, Cathy thought it

might be fun to add a baby fennec fox (above) this year, since this tiny desert creature fits so well into this year's theme: Animals of Africa. (The theme and the animal lineup change each year.) As she holds the tiny blonde fox in the palm of one hand, Cathy shows the audience how nature has camouflaged this creature to blend into the color of the desert sands. Next, Cathy asks her young audience to cup their hands behind their ears, making them more aware of how the huge ears on the fox sharpen its hearing so it can find its next meal. Cathy is also frank in explaining the circle of life: that it's nature's way for larger predators to feed on smaller animals.




The children eagerly identify which part of Africa each animal calls home, from the island habitat of the Madagascar hissing cockroach to the northern forests of eagle owls, the grassy savannas of the spur-thighed tortoise, or exotic Zanzibar, the habitat of the African pygmy hedgehog.

But the real show-stopper is Panda, an African pied crow. Naturalist Heather Neldner encourages Panda to say a few of the 100 human words and phrases the bird knows. Then Panda swoops through the air, picks up a can and drops it delicately into a recycling bin. This gives Cathy a chance to talk about what all of us can do to preserve the world's dwindling natural resources, and

save animals from extinction. Turn off lights you're not using, she says, recycle, and never buy anything made from an endangered species.

Like all the naturalists, Cathy learned as a child to enjoy bird-watching and soon was volunteering at a local zoo. That love of birds led her to major in environmental studies in college, and to the job she now holds. "It's wonderful to be able to teach what you love," she says.

For information on how to schedule a free performance of Care for Critters, call the Zoological Society, (414) 258-2333. Ask for Renee for public programs or Lisa for school programs. 



Top: African pygmy hedgehog

Right: Panda, the African pied crow



Cathy Spahn shows a golden eagle to (from left) Travis Brellenthin, 9, Dan Mueller, 11, and Dan's sister Jenna, 8.



# Orangutan Originality



**"When the world loses one of its great apes in the wild, it will be really tragic. There will be no way to change that."**

Trish Khan

BY SANDRA WHITEHEAD

When zookeepers train orangutans, one might wonder who is training whom. Consider Saba, a clever 30-year-old female at the Milwaukee County Zoo, who has developed her own monetary system. She steals items from zookeepers to barter for fruit.

"She will show it to everyone until someone gives her her asking price," says primates area supervisor Trish Khan. "She is very intuitive. She seems to know how badly we want the item back and decides whether to settle for half a banana or to hold out for two bananas."

Orangutans are famously difficult animals to train, says animal trainer Vicki Hearne in a *Harper's* magazine essay "Can an Ape Tell a Joke?" It's not because they aren't smart. It's because they are so self-contained, she says. "Unlike most other apes (gorillas, chimpanzees and bonobos), they are not dependent on social support and approval, which vastly complicates the training relationship."

Give a chimpanzee a hexagonal peg and several holes of different shapes. The chimp will experiment, trying it this way and that, says primate researcher Lyn Miles, a professor of anthropology at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. Give the same puzzle to an orangutan and wait. He will use the peg to scratch his back or will ignore it as he braids his hair. He will stare, maybe for hours, as if meditating. "Then, as if thinking of something else, he casually slips the hexagonal peg into the right hole."

Dr. Birute Galdikas, the world's leading expert on orangutans and a recipient of the Milwaukee County Zoo's Wildlife Conservation Award, discovered that orangutans also communicate quite differently from other apes. While other apes


have their own "languages" of sounds, facial expressions, postures and behaviors, orangutans spend a great deal of time alone and appear to have had little reason to develop complex forms of communication.

While adult females mingle with both males and females of all age groups and adolescent orangutans mingle with each other, adult males avoid other males, except to fight in the presence of a female ready to mate. That's why 33-year-old Dick, who was born at the Zoo, is separated from Saba and Tommy, 19, his and Saba's offspring. Researchers suspect the reason male orangutans stay alone is because of the amount they eat. They often weigh up to 200 pounds and need so much fruit that if they traveled in groups, they wouldn't survive.

It's hard to look into the wonderfully intelligent eyes of an orangutan and realize that this great ape is facing extinction. Today the two species of orangutan can be found in the wild only on the Indonesian Islands of Borneo and Sumatra. "Forest fires in Borneo during the last six years – many deliberately set by palm-oil farmers – have wiped out millions of hectares of orangutan habitat," says Khan. More habitat has been lost to illegal logging. People hunting orangutans for the pet trade also are a significant threat. Though several conservation efforts are being made, "we are losing the battle," she says. "Unless something changes,

they will be extinct in the wild in only 10 years."

Meanwhile, at the Zoo, Dick enjoys his solitude while Saba and Tommy play a game of "find the object" with zookeeper Khan. She hides several objects in their exhibit. Then she stands behind a door where they can see her and holds up an identical object, such as a ball, to one she had hidden. The orangutans then try to find the matching object in their exhibit.

Once Khan accidentally left a broom in the exhibit for which there was no match. "I tried to get Saba to bring the broom. She knew I wanted something but couldn't understand what it was. She kept bringing different items. Finally, I shined a laser light on the broom. I saw the light bulb go on in her head. It was like, 'So that's what you want. Why didn't you say so?'" 



< Orangutans are intelligent and playful. Saba (large photo at left) and Tommy (inset) have plenty of toys in their exhibit, and you'll often see one of them covering its head with a blanket and playing peekaboo.



The Zoological Society recognizes its major donors through membership in the Platypus Society. Platypus members have the option to receive exclusive VIP benefits. If you would like more information about the Platypus Society, please contact the Zoological Society's Development Director, Joan Rudnitzki, at (414) 276-0843, vmail 217.

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The late Jane Bradley Pettit

ASF, A Platypus Society member since 1990, Mrs. Pettit made a generous gift to the New Zoo capital campaign in 1991 and was a longtime supporter of the Zoo and Zoological Society. Mrs. Pettit died Sept. 9, 2001. She is missed.

"I think it's terribly tragic that songbirds are in decline. What are we going to do? We're going to lose them all. I'm grateful that there is such a project as Birds Without Borders - Aves Sin Fronteras." Jane Bradley Pettit made that comment in October 2000 about the Zoological Society's international bird research-conservation-education project. She had just received a Platypus Society award for providing emergency funding in 1999 for the education program of BWB.

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## Colobus Monkey

Born: September 29, 2001  
Primates of the World

The new baby colobus monkey at the Zoo is so popular among the other monkeys that there was friction over which relative would get to hold it. The baby and its parents, Jane and Christopher, share exhibit space with three other relatives who love to baby-sit, explained Jan Rafert, curator of primates and small mammals. Zookeepers finally had to remove two young females who kept stealing the cuddly youngster from Mom. Though only about 2 pounds at birth, the baby has grown quickly and was strong enough in October to cling tight to Mom when it didn't want to be held by the others. Like all colobus monkeys, this baby was all white at birth and won't turn black and white like its parents until about 6 months old. In their native Africa, these monkeys would live in treetops and rely on their agility and speed to elude enemies. They're very gentle and docile, and thrive on a diet of leaves and young shoots. Their stomachs are similar to a cow's, with separate compartments to break down fibers before digesting them. Early explorers called these monkeys "colobus," which means mutilated in Greek, because they were missing a thumb. Actually, they have no thumbs to make it easier to run along branches.



## Baird's Tapir

Arrived: October 7, 2001  
Winter: indoor exhibit next to rhinos  
Summer: outdoor South American Exhibit

Evie, the Zoo's new Baird's tapir, may look awkward and slow with a long, tapered nose that resembles a hose. But don't get in her way! Tapirs have strong jaws and teeth sharp enough to tear off an attacker's limb. Tapirs in their native habitat in countries like southern Mexico, Ecuador and Columbia spend their days hidden deep in the forest. Then at night they emerge to forage along riverbanks, looking for the fruits or plants on which these vegetarians thrive. Should a predator like a jaguar try to attack, the speedy tapir races into the middle of the lake or river for protection. Bob Hoffman, supervisor of the Zoo's Winter Quarters and of the South American Exhibit where the tapir resides in summer, has learned to be very, very careful around the unpredictable and speedy tapirs. But this new female is not aggressive, Hoffmann says. She was acquired recently from the zoo in Los Angeles. Zookeepers hope Evie will mate with Harley, the easy-going Baird's tapir that came to the Zoo three summers ago. Both tapirs weigh about 550 pounds each, though Evie at 18 is considerably older than Harley, age 5.



## Bonobo

Born: August 14, 2001  
Stearns Family Apes of Africo

The baby bonobo born to Ana Neema is a welcome addition to the Zoo, which has one of the largest captive bonobo populations in the world: 16 of the rare apes. Our Zoo's Kitty, at about age 51, is believed to be the oldest bonobo in captivity. Zookeeper Barbara Bell says that bonobo mothers keep their babies tightly tucked away from sight for the first few months. Zookeepers don't interfere with the mother-child bonding, even to weigh or sex the newborn. Bell is "80% certain it's a male." The baby's name will be in Lingala, the trade language of Congo. At nearly age 10, Ana Neema is a young, first-time mom, says Bell, adding: "She's doing a remarkable job." Bonobo females are sexually mature at age 8 or 9 and often have their first baby at 9 or 10. Bonobos (*Pan paniscus*) share 99% of their genetic makeup with humans. They are extremely endangered in the wild, living in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo. Researchers from the Zoological Society of Milwaukee have set up survey and anti-poaching operations within the Congo's Salonga National Park. "There's so much more to learn about bonobos; the constant warfare inhibits science and conservation efforts," says Bell. "Their diet appears to be mostly fibrous roots and vegetables, leaves and seasonal fruits." Their Zoo diet is made up of high-fiber vegetable pellets, supplemented with vegetables and fruit. The Zoo added two more adult bonobos last fall: Kosana from Belgium and Viaje from Mexico.



## Koala

Arrived: August 30, 2001  
Australia Building

This gray, furry creature may look like a bear. In fact, Moondani is not even related to the bear family. He's a marsupial, the type of mammal that carries its young in a pouch just as kangaroos do. Born in a Florida zoo, Moondani moved to San Diego before coming to the Milwaukee County Zoo. But Moondani is still a bit shy and not used to having people around him, says Daron Graves, Australia Building area supervisor. So this 3-year-old male koala is separated from the Zoo's two other koalas, R.J. (male) and Taree (female). In time, zookeepers hope Taree will mate with one of the two males, especially now that there is competition for her attention. By nature, koalas are solitary beings that venture from the treetops they call home only in mating season. In all, there are 300 types of koalas, which vary in size and color, living in Australia. Koalas eat only eucalyptus leaves, which also provide all the water they need. For the Zoo, this means flying in fresh eucalyptus leaves from Florida twice a week. It's not easy for any zoo to keep koalas, since it is expensive to keep bringing in fresh supplies of the leaves. But koalas are very popular with the public.







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