



Summer 2015

PlatyPress is a newsletter for members of the Platypus Circle, which includes individuals, corporations and foundations who share our passion for conserving wildlife and endangered species, educating people about the importance of wildlife and the environment, and supporting the Milwaukee County Zoo.

Platypus Passes Prove Perk for Paychex



Pam Runnells, branch manager of Paychex in Brookfield, shows off the company's Platypus Circle membership cards.

Photo by Richard Brodzeller

Pam Runnells, branch manager at Paychex in Brookfield, was looking for a new perk for her employees. The company has an employee fund, but it struggled in the past to spend it on something that everyone could enjoy. Then one day Runnells received a mailer about the Platypus Circle, the Zoological Society of Milwaukee's group of corporate and individual donors. She realized that just about everyone enjoys visiting the Milwaukee County Zoo.

When Paychex joined the Platypus Circle last year, it received three cards that each admit eight people to the Zoo and include free parking. The cards have proved popular at the 100-person office. Runnells set up an Outlook calendar allowing people to reserve the cards in advance for a day or weekend. "It's been very popular," she says. "Taking eight people to the Zoo is not cheap if you don't have a membership."

Employees enjoy the flexible, family-friendly perk, she says. One employee has a family of seven and hasn't been able to afford to visit the Zoo in the past. Now, in addition to taking his family, he can even afford something extra, such as a train ride or stuffed animals for the kids. "The Platypus cards make everyone feel valued, because that's something they can do with their families compliments of the company," Runnells says. The company conducted a survey when it was time to renew the Platypus Circle membership, and the majority voted in favor of renewal.

Runnells even held a leadership outing last year for managers during Milwaukee Journal Sentinel a la Carte, the annual food and entertainment event at the Zoo. "It was a great team-building experience," she says. "We weren't stuck in one place; we could walk around and be outside together."

While employees enjoy the passes, Runnells is pleased knowing that Paychex is contributing to a popular local institution. The company, which offers payroll, human resources and benefits services to small and mid-sized businesses, is based in Penfield, N.Y. "Giving back is certainly important," she says. "This is a way for us to be known better locally."

Save the Date!

The Platypus Circle Recognition Dinner will be held at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 15.

By Stacy Vogel Davis

Gorilla baby Sulaiman sits in a nest of wood wool in the renovated outdoor exhibit.

Although his diet is still mostly breast milk, he puts anything he finds in his mouth.

Photo by Richard Brodzeller



Gorilla Shalia and her baby, Sulaiman, enjoy some quiet time in the renovated outdoor Gorilla Yard. Photo by Richard Brodzeller

PlatyPress

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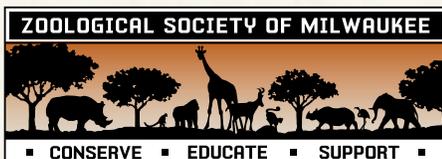
Growing Gorilla Baby Delights Visitors

Gorilla baby Sulaiman is about 8 months old and just starting to explore the world outside of mom's embrace – but never far from her reach! The gorilla was born in late November to mom Shalia and dad Cassius, the Milwaukee County Zoo's silverback gorilla and leader of the family troop. Recently, Sulaiman and the other gorillas were introduced to the renovated outdoor Gorilla Yard. The renovations were funded by the Zoological Society's 2013-14 Annual Appeal and a generous gift from the Northwestern Mutual Foundation. Northwestern Mutual employees got to vote on the baby's name.

Below is a description from gorilla keeper Claire Richard of Sulaiman's progress. Make sure to visit him in the outdoor Gorilla Yard or the indoor Gorilla Exhibit this summer!

Although Sulaiman sometimes seems more active, he is still just an infant. He spends most of his time sleeping. When awake, he has started to explore his environment, as much as his mother will allow. He is always within arm's reach of Shalia, especially if one of the others from the group is nearby. Occasionally Shalia will allow the others to interact with him through gentle touching and sniffing.

He still gets the majority of his nutrition from breast milk. When Shalia sits still, he is able to get his hands on things, some of which are food items. As an infant, anything in hand goes in the mouth. Over the next few months, he will increase his exploration (still within Shalia's reach) and increase his interaction with the others.





Left to right: Nicole Harris, Lexi Balistreri, Margaret Harris, Fia Balistreri and Erin Balistreri of Sendik's Food Markets pose in front of the Carnotaurus. Sendik's is the exhibit sponsor.



Diabloceratops, an ancestor of triceratops, was discovered in Utah in 2002.



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Neal and Carla Butenhoff, Platypus Circle members from Elm Grove, pose near the Humboldt penguins at the Expedition Dinosaur premiere.



Edmontonia was an armored North American dinosaur from the late Cretaceous Period.

A Dino-size VIP Premiere

The date said May 21, 2015, but the vibe was definitely Jurassic (and Cretaceous) as the first guests walked through the Milwaukee Zoo's special summer exhibit at the VIP premiere. Representatives from Sendik's Food Markets cut the ribbon in front of Expedition Dinosaur, located next to the Small Mammals Building. Guests included members of the Platypus Circle, Simba Circle and Serengeti Circle. The event runs through Labor Day. Photos by Olga Kornienko.

New Platypus Circle Members

We send a warm welcome and thanks to these new Platypus Circle members who joined between Oct. 1, 2014, and July 8, 2015.

Advanced Waste Services, Inc.
 Alexian Village of Milwaukee
 American Transmission Company
 Mark Benskin
 Bill & Joanne Bergum
 Bethesda Lutheran Home-Vicksburg Two
 Butters-Fetting Co.
 Verne & Marion Read Chapman Foundation
 Cleary Gull
 Desert Aire
 Joyce J. Eberhardt
 Dale & Cindy Gray
 Greco Homes, LLC
 Friends of the Horicon Public Library
 Phyllis & Howard Gruszynski
 Ann Hochschild
 Hunzinger Construction Company
 IEWC
 Karl Junginger Memorial Library
 Mary E. Kazmierczak
 Russell Kohl & Melissa Vernon
 Kohl's Department Stores
 Connie & John Kordsmeier
 James & Tricia Leissner
 Macromatic Controls
 Nick & Jamie Mallinger
 Tony & Kate Marino
 MCFI-Transitional Living Behavioral Health
 Milwaukee Electronics Corp.
 MRA - The Management Association
 Paper Machinery Corporation
 PieperPower/PPC Foundation
 Bill Reitman & Theresa Reagan
 Dianne Rice & Robert Herzog
 Sandra L. Sabbath
 SaintA
 Sue Ellen Schmidt
 Studio Gear
 Tailored Label Products, Inc.
 Victoria Teerlink & Jeffery Drope
 WalCo Teen Parent Project
 Jay & Madonna Williams
 Vicki & Douglas Woekener
 Sandra Zingler & Barbara Johnson



Robin Brotherhood, middle, and children Aaron Brotherhood and Ashley Brotherhood stop for a photo near the penguins. Robin works for Advanced Waste Services Inc., a new Platypus Circle member.



American dinosaur exhibit.



Kelly Blau, of SVA, gathers her children for a family photo. Lined up left to right are Olivia, 5, Michael, 3, Ava, 8, Erin, 7, Margaret, 11, and Grace, 10.

Premiere

Exhibit features a variety of dinosaurs from the Jurassic (and Triassic) period. The exhibit is located at the Milwaukee County Zoo. Representatives of sponsor American Transmission Company and Platypus Circle members who attended the exhibit premiere include members of the Platypus Circle. The exhibit is a great place to see a variety of dinosaurs.



'You Don't Have to Wait'

It's easy for Tami Garrison to say why she supports the Milwaukee County Zoo: "My boys. It's such an easy choice because I see how much they love it." So when she and her husband, Mathew, recently decided to create a will, they knew they wanted to include the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. They are now members of the Simba Circle, a group of people who have named the Society in their wills or estate plans. "We have to do things long term to protect the Zoo," she says. "I want my boys to be able to bring their kids here and have the same experiences we do."

Tami, 41, and Mathew, 40, of Menomonee Falls, hadn't thought much about creating a will until their financial adviser suggested it. Now they feel good knowing that their sons, 2-year-old Brady and 5-year-old Jack, are provided for in case anything tragic happens. "It can be uncomfortable to go through the process, but now I'm at ease knowing that I've made these decisions," Tami says.

Including the Zoological Society and their other favorite nonprofits in their will was a no-brainer. Tami, community affairs manager at MillerCoors, joined the Society's Associate Board in 2009 and now is a member of the Board of Directors. "We believe in giving, whether it's money, time or enthusiasm," Tami says. "Making a one-time gift is great, but figuring out how you can give over several years or make a planned gift is important."

Tami looks at the Zoo differently now that she has children. "I started seeing the Zoo through my sons' eyes. It became that much more magical and memorable." The family especially enjoys riding the North Shore Bank Safari Train. "It's our chance to sit and relax for a few minutes," she says. Plus, "I love seeing my 6-foot-5-inch husband squeeze into a miniature train car."

It's these kind of memories Tami wants to preserve for future generations. She wants people to know they don't have to be elderly or wealthy to join the Simba Circle. "We all have something to give," she says. "You don't have to wait."



Tami and Mathew Garrison pose with their children Jack, 5, and Brady, 2, at the Zoo's special summer exhibit on dinosaurs. Photo by Olga Kornienko

By Stacy Vogel Davis



Dr. Gretchen Cole, a previous veterinary resident at the Milwaukee County Zoo, lifts an anesthetized lemur to administer an X-ray. The Zoological Society helps support two veterinary residencies and a pathology fellowship at the Zoo. Photo by Richard Brodzeller

Making a Difference

Your Platypus Circle contribution helps the Zoological Society of Milwaukee fulfill its three-pronged mission to conserve, educate and support the Milwaukee County Zoo. A few examples of the programs and efforts sustained by your contribution include:

- Maintenance of the Zoo's exhibits, housing more than 2,700 animals
- Workforce training for college students in the Education Department intern program
- Valuable fellowships and residencies for veterinary graduate students
- Participation of Zoo and Society staff in local and global wildlife conservation studies

Cause and Career Converge for Zoo Librarian

Mary Kazmierczak still remembers one of the first questions she researched as librarian at the Milwaukee County Zoo. Dr. Bruce Beehler, then-deputy Zoo director, asked her to find out if red maple leaves are toxic to tapirs. “I couldn’t find the answer, but I did find that they’re toxic to animals similar to tapirs, so I suggested he not use red maple in the exhibit,” she recalls.

That’s just one example of the varied, and often obscure, questions Kazmierczak is asked in her role as librarian at the Zoo. But Kazmierczak – whose full title is librarian/information specialist for the Zoo and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee – goes above and beyond her job description. She’s also a Zoo Pride volunteer, Platypus Circle member and Simba Circle member.

Kazmierczak got a Zoo Pass with her mom in 1995 because they enjoyed visiting the Zoo together. In 1998 someone suggested she join Zoo Pride, the Society’s volunteer auxiliary, because she was at the Zoo so often. “I’ve been on the library committee since the very beginning because I worked in my high school library and loved it,” she says. She earned a master’s degree in library science in 2005 and started working for the Society that year. She continues to volunteer with Zoo Pride.

As librarian, it’s her job to answer research questions and track down article requests from zookeepers and other Zoo and Society staff. She also is in charge of developing and cataloging the Zoo’s collection of more than 4,000 books, many of which are housed in the Zoo Library in the farm area. She recently put the library catalog online, and she has started to digitize and catalog the library’s archives. She maintains the Society’s digital photo database and is responsible for the artwork adorning the library walls. She helped write “Milwaukee County Zoo,” a pictorial history of the Zoo published in 2014 as part of Acardia Publishing’s “Images of America” series. Her favorite part of the job? “Every day is different,” she says.

“Mary is more than just a librarian,” says Chuck Wikenhauser, Zoo director. “She’s also the Zoo’s archivist, in charge of keeping our history.” She has helped not only zookeepers but also researchers looking for information about the Milwaukee County Zoo and other zoo-related topics. “It’s nice to have a librarian who has not only the skills required but also the passion for the Zoo and helping people learn more about it,” Wikenhauser says.

Kazmierczak joined the Simba Circle, the group for people who have named the Society in a will or estate plan, about three years ago. “That was an easy decision because I have no children or nieces or nephews,” she says. She joined the Platypus Circle, the group for annual donors to the Society, this year because it allowed her to help the Zoo and earn a tax deduction. “People need to support the organizations that matter to them,” she says.



Mary Kazmierczak is librarian and information specialist for the Zoo and Zoological Society. She also is a member of Zoo Pride, the Simba Circle and the Platypus Circle. Photo by Richard Brodzeller

By Stacy Vogel Davis

Calendar of Events

Aug. 20-23

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel a la Carte, presented by Meijer

Sept. 13

Ride on the Wild Side, sponsored by Wheaton Franciscan - Midwest Spine & Orthopedic Hospital/Wisconsin Heart Hospital*

Sept. 15

Platypus Circle Recognition Dinner*

Sept. 26

Member field trip to Field of Dreams in Dyersville, Iowa*

Oct. 20

Simba Circle Luncheon*

Oct. 22

Zoo Brew, a Zoological Society beer-tasting and food fundraiser*

*Please pre-register

For more information, call 414-258-2333 or go online at zoosociety.org.