

**THE
KEEPER
WINTER 2003**



**San Diego Chapter
of
The American
Association of
Zoo Keepers**

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**CA Wolf Center Dinner:
A Howling Success**

By Bob Cisneros, Sr. Hospital Keeper

Each year, the third week of October is designated as Wolf Awareness Week across the country. Conservation organizations use this week as an opportunity to demystify the wolf, dispel any myths, and to raise public awareness about the importance of protecting wolves and their habitat. The California Wolf Center and Defenders of Wildlife celebrated this special week in Julian, CA with a conservation dinner fund-raiser Saturday evening, October 18th. Funding raised by the CWC went directly towards expanding their education and outreach

programs. The evening was a combination of gourmet food, Native American flute music, a silent auction, and a tour of the facility. Guest speaker Nancy Weiss from Defenders of Wildlife gave a presentation at the end of the evening discussing the myths and facts of wolves in California and conservation efforts to reintroduce wolves in their natural habitat throughout America. A special moment during the evening occurred when 10 year old Native American flute prodigy, Evren Ozan was accompanied by the wolf pack during his

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**Bowling for Rhinos
Has a New Sponsor**

There is some exciting news regarding Bowling for Rhinos (BFR), AAZK's highly successful, and grassroots program supporting four of the five species of rhinos left in the world today. BFR has a national sponsor in Blue Rhino, Inc. Now if you are wondering why you know the Blue Rhino name, it's probably because Blue Rhino propane gas powers your backyard grill during those summer barbecue months. The Blue Rhino sponsorship memorandum of agreement was signed during the annual conference in Cleveland earlier this year. The duration of the agreement will commence on January 1, 2004 and will expire on December 31, 2005. At this time an option for renewing the MOA will be discussed by the Board of Directors and Blue Rhino, Inc. So what does this mean for BFR? Bowling for Rhinos will be directly compensated by Blue Rhino, Inc. in the amount of \$20,000 per calendar year for their primary sponsorship. This is an additional \$20,000 on top of the money that AAZK raises yearly that will go directly to rhino conservation. In return for this sponsorship, AAZK has agreed to re-title the event as "The American Association of Zoo Keepers

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6th ICEE

By Yvette Kemp,
Sr. Mammal Keeper SD Zoo

Environmental enrichment has become an important part of the mental and physical well-being of animals in captivity – be it in zoos, aquariums, laboratories or farms. For the past 12 years, on every other year, professionals have been gathering in differ-

ent parts of the world to exchange ideas and facts on the need and importance of enrichment. Since environmental enrichment is a topic that interests me and I deeply believe in, I have made an effort to attend these conferences. The 5th confer-

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Wolf Center...

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performance. Playing the flute since age six, Evren recorded his first album by age eight and was the youngest participant in the Native American Flute Associations Inaugural Convention. His talent was appreciated not only by the wolves, but by guests as well. Two SD AAZK board members attended the CWC dinner and were impressed by the facilities, wolf enclosures, and the dedication of the all-volunteer staff. Their commitment became an important asset to the Wolf Center ten days later when the Cedar Fire threatened the compound and the wolves as it approached from the southern part of the facility. Having learned valuable lessons from the Pines Fires two years earlier, the CWC constructed more effective firebreaks around the perimeter. Volunteers stayed at the facility extinguishing embers, until ordered to leave. Two volunteers remained all night, however, and with a borrowed water truck and bulldozer, ensured that the Wolf Center and wolves would be safe from harm.

By morning, all personnel and wolves were safe and accounted for. The only structural loss to the fire was to the food storage building. Cleaning costs and lost revenue during the fires will add to their losses.

SD AAZK hopes to help CWC recover from the fires and commits to continued support on a yearly basis, just as our Bowling for Rhinos helps support Rhino conservation each year.

With that thought in mind, the San Diego Chapter of AAZK will be hosting a wine social at Wine Steals on Friday, December 5th from 5:00 PM until 9:00 PM, to benefit the California Wolf Center. Wine Steals is an exciting new bar offering a wide selection of quality

wines from around the world at affordable prices and rated over 85 by wine publications. They have offered to dedicated the night to the CWC. Wine at the no-host bar will be available for tasting by the glass and for purchase by the bottle. Hors d'oeuvres will be furnished by SD AAZK, donated by Chipotle Mexican Grill, The Abbey, Ono Sushi, and Hamburger Mary's. A silent auction will also be held to benefit the California Wolf Center. Items such as this wood burned portrait will be part of the auction. The California Wolf Center is a non profit organization located in Julian,



CA. Their mission is to increase awareness and conservation efforts in protecting and understanding the importance of all wildlife and wild lands by focusing on the history, biology, and ecology of the North American Gray Wolf through education, exhibition, and reproduction of endangered species and studies of captive wolf behavior.

We hope that you can join us Friday night, December 5th.

Wine Steals is located at 1243 University Avenue in Hillcrest.

For more information, please call the SD AAZK hotline at (619) 231-1515 extension 4672.

This event is open to members and non-members.

AAZK Annual Conference

By Denise Wagner,

Sr. Mammal Keeper, WAP

The 30th annual conference of the American Association of Zoo Keepers, Inc. has come and gone. This year's conference was hosted by the Greater Cleveland Area AAZK Chapter. The theme was "Strange Situations, Wild Occupations."

From start to finish it was a wonderful conference. It kicked off with an ice-breaker held at Jacob's Field where the Cleveland Indians play. There was a gourmet cheese platter, Mexican food, Asian food, and carved to order beef and turkey, and don't forget the dessert spread if one had room. The open bar was a plus as well. Tours of Jacob's Field were also available for delegates. One would begin to wonder if Cleveland could maintain this level of hospitality. Well, they did. It was overall one of the best conferences in recent years. There were a variety of topics covered in the paper sessions including husbandry, reintroduction programs, enrichment, operant conditioning and, especially heart wrenching to see, a synopsis of the devastating wild fires that decimated the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve in Australia through the eyes of its Senior Wildlife officer, Geoff Underwood, who also lost his home in the fires. After having observed the recent wildfires in southern California, it gives one even greater pause in realizing the devastation that can be caused. But on a brighter note, zoo day was wonderful. For those who have never been to a conference before, it is a week filled with learning, networking, fun, and most importantly, it's a sense of camaraderie that zoo keepers world-wide share with one another. Everyone is urged to try to make it to a conference at least once in their zoo career. Usually after having attended one you'll be hooked and want to attend again.

Environmental Enrichment ...

(Continued from page 1)

ence took place in beautiful Sydney, Australia, while the 4th conference took place in the green hills of Edinburgh, Scotland. This time, the 6th International Conference on Environmental Enrichment was hosted by the Johannesburg Zoo in South Africa from November 2nd to the 6th, and included four full days of paper sessions. Topics varied from the monitoring of endocrine levels during environmental enrichment to animal welfare to developing animal enrichment programs.

As a participant at the conference, I was able to address the enrichment topic that I have found useful as a keeper and animal care giver. I believe that enrichment can be used not only as a way to enhance captive animals enclosures, but as a tool that can be used to assist in their daily care and maintenance. By associating enrichment "toys" with husbandry tools, such as scales, flea treatment, etc., husbandry can become a non-stressful and helpful event. Keepers and veterinarians can also observe how animals interact with enrichment items and determine if their movements and behavior are normal. Whether enrichment is used for an animal's mental or physical well-being, it is the animal that comes out the benefactor.

This point was demonstrated throughout the conference. Especially in one of my favorite presentations, "Animal Welfare, Public Concern and Environmental Enrichment: The Chicken as an Example." Here we were able to learn of how UK chicken farmers are becoming more aware of the need for farm animal welfare. By basing enrichment on the bird's preference for certain items, rather than basing their needs on human preconceptions, farmers were able to reveal that playing the radio to chickens reduced aggression, improved health and increased productivity. It was also determined that chickens are attracted to

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1st International Conference on Zoo Keeping

By Leticia Plasncia,

From October 2nd through the 10th, the Birdpark Avifauna in the Netherlands hosted the first conference ever aimed at those who are directly in charge of the care and maintenance of captive animals – the zoo keeper.

Associations of Zoo Keepers from all over the world were able to get together and share information regarding all aspects of zoos and zoo keeping.

To give you an idea as to the diversity of subjects that were covered, here are a few of the titles of papers presented: "Making a Difference with Bowling for Rhinos," "IF I Ran the Zoo, I'd Get into In-Situ," "Nile Crocodile Training," "Management of Glucose Toxicity in a Tiger," "The Role of Zoo Keepers in Zoo Research," and much, much more. Workshops entitled "Enrichment at Your Zoo," "Carcasses for Big Cats," "Free Flight Birds," and "Training for Medical Reasons" were also available to the attendees.

I found this to be a well organized and informative conference. And it was interesting to see that the same issues were being addressed at each zoo, no matter if they were from Spain, Belgium, Holland or Australia.

Compared to other conferences I have attended, I would have to say this was one of the more educational and rewarding ones. The reason? It addressed common job related issues keepers have to face.

BFR Sponsorship...

(Continued from page 1)

Bowling for Rhinos, sponsored by Blue Rhino, Inc." AAZK will incorporate the Blue Rhino logo on BFR literature and signage and will recognize Blue Rhino in the promotion of BFR events. AAZK will not seek additional sponsorship from direct competitors of Blue Rhino but can continue to seek additional sponsorships from companies not in competition with Blue Rhino. That means no other bottled gas companies can nationally sponsor this event but companies such as Rhino Linings can be used as sponsors. Blue Rhino will make every effort to inform their local distributors and dealers of local BFR events. Here is another untapped source of fund-raising for local chapters. Blue Rhino plans to communicate its support of AAZK and BFR by announcing support for rhino preservation on their cylinder packaging and display signage at 11,000+ retail locations nationwide, as well as more detailed information on their website, www.bluerhino.com. Blue rhino will also provide direct support for BFR by providing public relations support in communities where the events are held, and communicating the details regarding BFR events on their website where feasible.

Overall thi is a tremendous boost to an already successful program and it mean more money will be going to where it's needed most, African and Indonesia.

Please look for more information regarding this new partnership in your BFR packets. If anyone has any questions regarding this sponsorship program, please feel free to contact any of the Board of Directors of the national association of the BFR National Coordinator Patty Pearthree.

SDAAZK's Recent Presentation:

Review by Robert Cisneros

The Brown Bears of the Katmai Wilderness

Presented by JoAnne Simerson, San Diego Zoo Senior Animal Trainer

Five days in Alaska's Katmai Wilderness, living off of a 65 ft. fishing trawler, daily skiffy rides from the boat to the beach, supplied with photography equipment and only one simple objective: locate, observe, and photograph Alaskan brown bears in the Katmai Peninsula. September's AAZK presentation was a photographic journal of JoAnne Simerson's Alaskan wilderness adventure.

Simerson spent most of her time in coastal Katmai observing the "Coasties," a term used for the bears of that region. "The only way that anyone can get into this area is by boat or seaplane," explained Simerson. The region, however, is not remote to all. "The bears are on all the inlets and islands, everywhere you looked." "We made sure they saw us and that they acknowledged us, and then we would move slowly in their direction," recounted Simerson of their "rules of engagement" with the bears. "If we saw any impact on their behavior, we would either stop or leave the area."

The peninsula was not always a paradise for bears. A volcanic eruption in Katmai in 1912 buried the lush green wilderness with hot pumice and ash. "It became a living laboratory for scientists to study how the earth can repair itself after such a cataclysmic tragedy," added Simerson. In 1918, President Wilson declared the Katmai region a national monument. Between 1918 and 1980, scientists who studied in Katmai after the eruption, realized that there was another treasure in the area that needed to be preserved: the Alaskan brown bear. In 1980, Katmai be-

came a national park and preserve.

Today the geography is perfect for wildlife. In between the tidal flats and mountains is the sedge meadow, important because it provides food and flat ground for its habitants. The ashen environment of the peninsula makes for rich habitat both on land and sea. A wealth of sea lions, sea otters, orcas, gray whales and humpbacks adorn the waters. Birdlife, too, is abundant in the area. "There is nesting everywhere; ravens, puffins, hawks, loons, gulls, and even bald eagles were plentiful. It's an incredible environment," exclaimed JoAnne, "and no one is there."

On land, even the bears that Simerson came to observe and photograph were prolific. JoAnne explained, "they were behind us, in the woodpiles we were sitting on, popping up out of the alders, swimming across the bow of the kayak, and of course at low tide, they were all over the beaches."

At the time of Simerson's visit in early June, the bears were just coming out of hibernation. The sedge meadows are the first place the bears go to get food. "It is very common to see herds of brown bears grazing in the meadows," Simerson related. What is uncommon is to see the males (boars) traveling together. Although peacefully grazing, the boars are covered with scars, products of battles with other boars during breeding season. JoAnne discussed in great detail their breeding and courtship behaviors and elaborated on techniques used by sows to protect their cubs.

The bears of Katmai successfully navigate the peninsula in search of food, as evidenced by the plethora of empty clam shells along the beaches. Their ability to find clams results from taking advantage of the exposed beach dur-

ing low tides. Simerson provided details of their techniques:

"At low tide, as the claims squirt up through the sand to dig down deeper, the bears jump on the squirt and then start digging. They will then pull the clam out and put it in their mouth... then take their paw and jam it all the way into the back onto their molars and then crush it with their back molars."

Researchers have found bears in the region who have died from abscessed teeth suggesting that this is not the definitive method for cracking clam shells. A better method observed by Simerson involved the use of both claws empowered by body weight, prying open the clam shells while digging the meat out with their claws. JoAnne was also able to observe how the sows taught their cubs to forage for food. From barnacles and clams to grasses and kelp, the cubs learn one of the most important lessons from their mom... how to find food successfully. Simerson simplified further, "every place the mom's nose is, their goes their nose."

Not wanting to have any adverse effects on the bears' behaviors, Simerson and the observation team would leave each group after three hours of observations. "We carried no weapons, no spray, no bear deterrent. All we had for protection was common sense and knowledge of bear behavior."

JoAnne will return to Katmai with two groups of six people next August. "It's very pricey, but it's the most incredible trip I have ever been on, including all of my Africa

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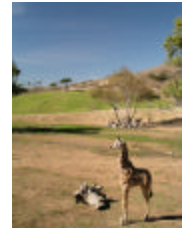
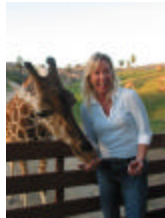
San Diego AAZK's Annual Photo Caravan

On October 14th, AAZK held its annual Wild Animal Park Photo Caravan.

For those who were able to attend, space is limited to 24 people on a reservation basis only, it proved to be an experience they hope to repeat soon.

Nicki Boyd said, "The photo caravan was another incredible experience. I will never tire of getting to be that close to these magnificent creatures. Feeding rhino and giraffe makes me want to support conservation even more through AAZK and events like Bowling for Rhinos. Thanks to all the staff at the Wild Animal Park who helped make this happen! And to the tour guides who stayed late: Denise Wagner, Tammy Batson, Aimee, Goldcamp, and Keri. Thank you!"

Here are some pictures that were taken. If you couldn't make it this time, we hope you can make it next year!



Brown Bears... continued

(Continued from page 4)

trips."

If you are interested in participating in ongoing research, there is a bear study that Bear TAG (<http://www.bearden.org/beartag.htm>) and IBA (<http://www.bearbiology.com>) have established through funds made possible by Washington University. The project will study the effects of humans on bear populations on Kat-

mai Peninsula and another area of Katmai.

"I highly recommend that you don't do this unless you are a very comfortable camper. Alaska is very wet and you would will be living in tents." Volunteers are asked to make either a one or two week commitment, depending on the project.

For more information on bear research in the field, visit <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/bear/iba/information.htm>.

More information will be available lo-

cally this winter as San Diego hosts two bear conferences in February: Polar Bears International (<http://www.polarbearsalive.org>), and the 15th International Conference on Bear Research and Management (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/bear/iba/information.htm>).

In The News:

The World Conservation Union Releases the 2003 Red List of Threatened Species

Gland, Switzerland, 18 November 2003 (IUCN – The World Conservation Union).

This article was written by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). Founded in 1961, AWF is the leading conservation organization focused solely on the African continent. To learn more about AWF and its program, visit www.awf.org

The Seychelles, the Galapagos, Hawaii, the remote South Atlantic islands – all conjure up images of tropical paradise or rugged beauty. But beneath these islands' striking appeal lies a story of invasion and destruction that is undermining the future of thousands of native species.

This is one of the stark messages to emerge from the 2003 update of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the world's most authoritative inventory of the conservation status of plants and animals. Thousands of scientists and conservationists from all over the world contribute to this rapidly expanding list, compiled by IUCN – The World Conservation Union, through its Species Survival Commission (SSC) and partner organizations.

Since the release of the 2002 Red List, more than 2,000 new entries have been added and 380 taxa (species, subspecies, etc.) reassessed. The IUCN Red List now includes 12,259 species threatened with extinction (falling into Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable categories). A total of 762 plant and animal species are now recorded as Extinct with a further 58 known only in cultivation or captivity.

Some notable new additions to the List this year include 1,164 Ecuadorian plants, 125 Hawaiian plants, 303 cycads and 3 Galapagos Island snails. All known conifer species have now been assessed, including a new discovery in Viet Nam and a rediscovered species in China. The many movements, into higher threat categories include one of the world's largest freshwater fish, 3 Neotropical primates and 6 albatrosses.

More than 12,000 species are known to be threatened with extinction. While we are still only scratching the surface in assessing all known species, we are confident this figure is an indicator of what is happening to global biological diversity," said Achim Steiner, IUCN Director General.

"The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species provides the best available knowledge necessary for sound conservation action. We now need the political will and resources to stem loss of biodiversity. Human activities may be the main threat to the world's species but humans can also help them recover – the Chinese crested ibis, the Arabian oryx and the white rhino are just a few examples," Steiner added.

Enrichment...

(Continued from page 3)

video images, and regular playback reduced fear. By placing a familiar odor in an unfamiliar setting, fear of novel places, food and birds was also reduced. Lastly, placing bunches of string in cages or pens kept the chickens interested and promoted foraging and reduced feather pecking. All these actions, as minor as they may seem, were and are sufficient to significantly improve the quality of life for thousands of chickens.

Over 40 presentations were made with over 100 delegates from around the world. It is a conference in which more and more animal care professionals are getting involved.

The conference was not all work though. It began with welcome function at the Johannesburg Zoo, with a

festive welcome from the city's mayor. Excursions included the Johannesburg Zoo, the Pretoria Zoo and the DeWildt Cheetah Research Center. We also visited the Montecasino Bird Park, where we walked through beautiful aviaries filled with exotic birds and small antelope.

The closing nights Gala dinner featured delicious food, entertainment, and the last chance to share time and ideas with new and old friends alike. Overall, it was an excellent and very educational conference, in which I hope to become more involved.

And in 2 years, the 7th International Environmental Enrichment Conference will take place in yet another exotic and far away place... New York City. The Bronx's Wildlife Conservation Society will be hosting that conference.

If enrichment is something that you would like to read more about, or you are interested in enrichment ideas,

there are many sources you can look into. AAZK's web site has a section dedicated to enrichment. Go to www.aazk.org and click on the Enrichment Committee section for information on enrichment guidelines, databases, etc. The Shape of Enrichment is also an excellent source of enrichment ideas, along with a training video library. To learn more about the Shape of Enrichment log onto www.enrichment.org.

I look forward to the next enrichment conference!

AAZK's National News

At this year's National AAZK Conference held in Cleveland, two new Board of Directors members were sworn in.

Representing your Associations for the next four years as new board members are Shane Good (Cleveland Metroparks Zoo) and Jeanette Beranger (Roger Williams Park Zoo). Both bring a wealth of ideas and experience to the board through their experiences on the International Outreach Committee.

Returning for another four years are Kevin Shelton (The Florida Aquarium), who is the outgoing president and in-coming vice-president, and Jacque Blessington

(Kansas City Zoo) as the out-going vice-president.

Returning board members for the next two years are Bob Hayes (Keauhou Bird Conservation Center), Bruce Elkins (Indianapolis Zoo), and the new in-coming president, Denise Wagner (San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park).

All are eager to represent you, so if you have ideas, comments, or suggestions regarding the direction of the Association, do not hesitate to contact any of the board members. They can be reached through the website at:
www.aazk.org

Just click on the Board of Directors page.

In case you didn't catch it, Denise Wagner is the AAZK San Diego Chapter Secretary, and now, the National AAZK President as well.

Congratulations Denise !!!

Book Review:

By the San Diego Zoo Library Reading Group

The Bird's of Heaven: Travels with Cranes

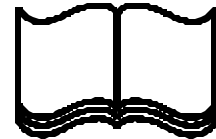
By Peter Matthiessen & Robert Bateman, 2001.

National Book Award-winner Matthiessen (The Snow Leopard) provides a fascinating look at the present state of crane conservation. He takes the reader on his travels throughout the world, in an attempt to determine the status of the remaining 15 species of cranes. These large flying birds celebrated in myth and folklore are found everywhere from Siberia to Australia, sub-Saharan Africa to North America. Mathiessen details their lives and futures and introduces readers to fascinating bits of local history and legend. The text is accompanied by color reproductions of paintings by nature artist Robert Bateman. It is a rich book That succeeds on several levels.

Paperback \$16.00 368p.

The group discussion was held after viewing "Winged Migration." The movie provided an interesting backdrop for our more focused book discussion.

Everyone agreed that the movie should have had more footage of cranes.
:-)



The Library Reading Group began in the summer of 2002. Since then, over a dozen people repeatedly participate in this discussion group, meeting monthly at the San Diego Zoo's Library. Participating members come from Birds, Mammals, Education, Pathology, CRES, Curators, Membership, Info Systems and ZooNooz Departments.

If you are interested in participating, contact Linda Coates, the Society Librarian. Or check for announcements in the zoo's Flash Report and various bulletin boards throughout the zoo.

San Diego AAZK Chapter
c/o San Diego Zoo
P.O. Box 120551
San Diego, CA 92112
Email: sdaazk@yahoo.com
Phone: (619) 231-1515 extension 4672
Email for: TheKeeperSDAAZK@cox.net
Website: www.geocities.com/sdaazk



The San Diego AAZK Chapter

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CALENDAR

LOCAL EVENTS:

Watch for Updates

CA Wolf Center Wine Social Benefit Hosted by SD AAZK on December 5, 2003, 5 PM – 9 PM. 1243 University Avenue, SD.

SD AAZK Swap Meet; December 7, approx. 6:30 AM – 2 PM. Kobey's Swap Meet. Sports Arena. Volunteers needed.

January, TBA.

NATIONAL/ INTERNATIONAL EVENTS:

2nd International Tapir Symposium; January 10 – 16, 2004 Panama City, Panama. Sponsored & organized by IUCN Species Survival Commission, Tapir Specialist Group & the AZA Tapir Taxon Advisory Group. To register www.caligo.com/tapir/

Wildlife Handling & Chemical Immobilization Course for Wildlife Professionals; January 15 – 17, 2004. CA Wolf Center, Julian, CA. Info at www.californiawolfcenter.org

International Polar Bear Husbandry Conference February 4 – 7, 2004 in San Diego, CA. Polar Bear International (PBI) and the AZA's Bear TAG are co-hosting this conference to be held at the Bahia Hotel on Mission Bay. More info at www.polarbearsinternational.org or tel. (225) 923-3114.

International Association of Avian Trainers and Educators (IAATE); February 18 – 21, 2004. Hosted by the Toronto Zoo, Canada. For info call (416) 392-6008.

Animal Behavior Management Alliance (ABMA); April 4 – 9, 2004. Hosted by the National Aquarium in Baltimore & the Baltimore Zoo. Info at www.theabma.org

AZA Eastern Regional Workshop May 12 – 15, 2004. Louisville Zoo; Louisville, KY.

2004 AAZK National Conference September 26 – 30, 2004. Dallas, TX. Hosted by the Dallas AAZK Chapter and The Dallas Zoo. For more info go to www.aazk.org