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The American Association of Zoo Keepers
San Diego Chapter's
Quarterly Newsletter—Summer 2007

Message from the President

By Robert Cisneros, SD AAZK President

During the week of July 15—21, San Diego Zoo will join other zoos across the country to celebrate the first National Zoo Keeper Week. Initiated by the San Diego Chapter and supported by national AAZK, National Zoo Keeper Week will focus on the multi-faceted role that zoo keepers play in the conservation of endangered species. Plans are underway to ensure that both guests and keepers benefit from this national celebration.

AAZK is currently working with the Zoological Society of San Diego to organize a zoo night at Petco Park, a happy hour, a morning assembly, an online silent auction to benefit a conservation project or activity yet to be determined, and opportunities for keepers to participate in *special speakers* talks. We'll keep you posted as arrangements become solidified.

As AAZK celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, it is only fitting that we should observe a national celebration of this caliber. In 1967, AAZK was conceived in the North Park garage of Dick Sweeney along with Gerald "Red" Thomas, Conrad Grayson, Dennis Melvin, Ken Willingham, Carl Pyle, and Walt Bromley. Their goal was to develop an organization of zoo keepers that would promote professionalism, continuity, and communication among zoo keepers across the continent.

Since then, AAZK has grown into a national organization comprised of 84 chapters in the US and Canada. The seven founders had a vision for our profession, creating an organization that would promote and encourage professional development and standardization of zoo keeping. They emphasized the importance of communication in an environment that would soon be evolving. When you think about it, zoo keeping has changed considerably since 1967.

Consider the following:

- Keepers are participating in field/conservation projects.
- Animal training is not just for shows, keepers are using operant conditioning for animal behavior and husbandry management.
- Enrichment has become formalized, organized, and structured. It's no longer just a primate activity.
- The Web has become a portal for quick information gathering and exchange.
- E-mail has replaced most phone calls to other institutions and allows immediate contact with overseas organizations.
- Computers are regularly used now for record keeping and data transfer.

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L.A. Zoo Trip

By Yvette Kemp, SD AAZK Vice President

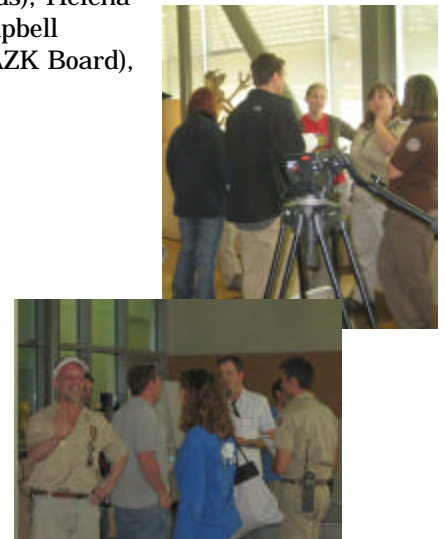
On April 12, 10 Zoological Society employees and members of AAZK attended and participated in the first Annual Southern California Keeper Exchange hosted by the Los Angeles Zoo's newly reinstated AAZK Chapter.

Event organizer, Jim Haigwood, LA Zoo quarantine hospital keeper, invited eight AZA accredited institutions to participate in what is hoped to be the first of many opportunities for southern California animal care professionals to share information, make new acquaintances, and reconnect with old friends. Over 60 animal keepers, veterinarians, educators, curators, and veterinary technicians participated, thus making it a very successful event.

After touring behind-the-scenes throughout the Zoo, we were treated to pizza and a chance to socialize. Then it was time to share information and ideas. Presentations included fieldwork projects in Mexico, Southeast Asia, and Africa, an extraordinary view of the endangered kakapo, and operant conditioning involving the L.A. Zoo's Sumatran rhino. SD AAZK members spoke about their experiences with hoofstock rearing, the Grevy's zebra project, Bowling for Rhinos, the Keeper Enrichment Program, and how AAZK affects us personally and professionally.

Thank you to the LA Zoo and LA AAZK for their hospitality and work putting the event together. And thanks to the SD AAZK members for their attendance and participation: Shelley Raynor (Birds), Yvette Kemp (Hospital Keeper, SD AAZK Board), Bob Cisneros (CZ Lead, SD AAZK Board), Athena Wilson (Birds), Helena Fitch-Snyder (Education, Prosimians), Mike Langridge (Mammals), Randy Campbell (Mammals), Adam Ruble (Mammals), Aimee Goldcamp (WAP Mammals, SD AAZK Board), and Laurie Brogan (Birds, SD AAZK Board).

We look forward to the 2nd Annual Southern California Keeper Exchange!



President's Message, continued...

(Continued from page 1)

More the rule than the exception, today's keeper is educated with at least a bachelor's degree in animal science or some related field.

More and more of our animals are at risk of extinction as their natural habitat vanishes due to competition for resources.

What might seem like a week of national appreciation is actually an opportunity to promote public awareness about our profession and the valuable contribution that we make to the care and conservation of captive exotic animals.

As the need to protect and preserve our wildlife and vanishing habitats has increased, our role as educators and wildlife ambassadors has become essential. During the week of July 15—21, celebrate National Zoo Keeper Week; zoo keepers and our animals deserve the recognition.

UC Davis, Wildlife Health Center: CA Puma

By Bob Cisneros, SD AAZK President

Before the Cedar fire of 2003, over half a million people utilized the Cuyamacas. At that same time, there were approximately 48 mountain lions in the same area.

Michael Puzzo from the UC Davis Wildlife Center wants to know exactly how man and beast coexist without getting in each other's way. To do this, Puzzo uses GPS satellite technology to keep track of many of the mountain lions in San Diego County. At last April' AAZK presentation, Puzzo explained how his research can help us understand mountain lion behavior.



Existing within fragmented and developed landscapes, mountain lions can cover a large area in pursuit of food. With a range of over 700 square miles, these ambush predators feed off of both bighorn sheep and deer. Keeping accurate track of these predators' movements is made possible through GPS technology.

Puzzo and his team scan areas where there is a high probability of mountain lion presence in search of scrapes, scat, scratch marks, and a cached kill. Puzzo uses a large trap (a large version of the have-a-heart traps), baits it with a fresh road-kill deer, and waits. Once a mountain lion has been trapped, it is immobilized, given an examination, and fitted with a GPS radio collar. The data from this collar can be downloaded, providing the research team with valuable information about where the cougar has been and for how long. Information and samples collected during the immobilization provide valuable genetic information for the researchers.

One of the greatest threats to mountain lions is habitat loss. According to Puzzo, work is currently being done to protect and link wildlife corridors, allowing mountain lions and other animals to move freely between protected corridors. Man and mountain lion have co-existed for centuries, but as development continues to shrink our wildlife habitats and increase the distance between these isolates, it becomes increasingly important that we learn to balance the needs of people and wildlife.

To learn more about the UC Davis Wildlife Health Center and their mission to restore healthy wildlife populations and the ecosystems in Southern California, visit their website at <http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/whc/scp/>.



National Zoo Keeper Week Becoming a Reality

There is a Congressional resolution in progress that will declare July 15—21 as National Zoo Keeper Week. Congresswomen Susan Davis (D-CA 53rd) and Nancy Boyda (D-KS 2nd) are co-sponsoring the House resolution. The proclamation was initiated by San Diego AAZK and co-sponsored by national AAZK.

Although the resolution has not made it to the congressional floor, it has received all the necessary preliminary approvals needed to be introduced. In the meantime, while Congresswomen Davis and Boyda are preparing to introduce this resolution, we have begun to make plans to celebrate the first National Zoo Keeper Week.

This is an excellent opportunity for zoos to highlight our profession. It will also be an ideal time for chapters to en-

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Bowling for Rhinos 2007

By Aimee Goldcamp, BFR Coordinator

This year's Bowling for Rhinos (BFR), sponsored by Blue Rhino (<http://www.bluerhino.com/>), is in fact our best year ever. By the end of the 4 hour event we raised \$16,500 for rhino conservation.

Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Ujung Kulon National Park, and Bukit Barisan Seletan National Park are the three sanctuaries that directly benefit from the funds collected through BFR. We are proud to announce that they are receiving an extra \$5,000 from our chapter this year.

This year marked the first time that the executive board of the Zoological Society of San Diego (ZSSD) participated in BFR. Besides having a stellar bowling team present, they donated many terrific gifts to make this a stand out year for our local AAZK chapter. One of the most sought after items they donated was the chance to win a day off with pay. Each ZSSD employee that participated this evening had the chance to have their name drawn to win. Five lucky employees received this wonderful donation.

The ZSSD also donated a gift certificate to Albert's restaurant plus two opportunities for an employee and guest to participate in the Wild Animal Park's Photo Caravan.

The most generous donation came at the end of the evening when Tim Mulligan, ZSSD Human Resource Director, and the executive board covered the cost of the alley for all the bowlers. By doing so, an extra \$1,400 will be going directly to the three sanctuaries that BFR supports. Tim Mulligan and his staff, along with the executive board, made this year's BFR far more unbelievable and special. Our warmest and heart filled thanks go out to them.

Of course, we would never forget all of our terrific bowlers and volunteers because they are the ones who make this possible. Besides all of the charitable donations they collected, the bowlers and volunteers make the atmosphere at BFR so electrifying. From all of the silly and crazy team names to the wacky and funny bowling team t-shirts, BFR is becoming a *must do* event. The camaraderie amongst the bowling teams is what brings people back year after year.

I can't thank you all enough. Just when I thought we couldn't surpass our previous record of \$12,000, everyone's generosity comes through again.

The remarkable people at Kearny Mesa Bowl always welcome us and without them none of this would be possible. Cory and Johnny, the management staff at Kearny Mesa, help out every year without hesitation.

We also have to give a big thank you to all of the donors that provided silent auction and raffle items. Phil's BBQ, Buffalo Exchange, Fantastic Sam's, Flashbacks, World Famous Restaurants, Hooters, Walter Todd Salon, Café on Park, and many more provided raffle prizes. La Jolla Shores Hotel, Ramada Inn & Suites, Hilton Harbor Island, Sheraton Harbor Island, Holiday Inn Select, Courtyard Marriott, Hilton Mission Valley, Westin Horton Plaza, Bees Essential Candles & Gifts, American Golf, and many other donors who helped us raise money during the silent auction.

The incredibly hard working members of San Diego AAZK's board are the reason why this event is so successful. Matt Akel and his powers of persuasion astound us every year. His talent and dedication are truly remarkable. Bob Cisneros is our heart and soul. He inspires and motivates us all. Nicki Boyd is a force to be reckoned with. Nothing keeps her from winning the prize for raising the most donations. Once again she was tops with \$1,400. Yvette Kemp is the woman who can do it all. In addition to checking bowlers, she was also worked the crowd to buy raffle tickets. Laurie Brogan continues to improve our local chapter membership and we can't forget her outstanding ability to sell those tasty baked goods. Eileen Neff is my partner in crime? she just knows when to lend a helping hand. You guys are *the best*.

We look forward to seeing you all next year and thank you one and all!





Zoo Keeper Enrichment Group

By Yvette Kemp SD AAZK Vice President

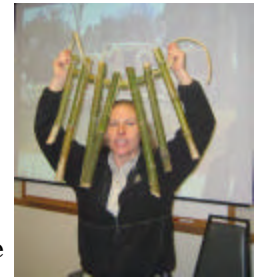
Every month, keepers from the zoo have been meeting to discuss enrichment. Topics include idea exchanges, workshops, enrichment items requests and wish lists (as seen on the Zoo's website), and organizing Enrichment Weekend Highlights (the second weekend each month where keepers tell guests about enrichment and the animals they care for). So far this year we have had two workshops where keepers made enrichment items for the animals in their care.



First we got together to make piñatas. Piñatas are made with paper (no ink), a balloon, flour, and water. Mix the flour and water until you get a smooth, thin paste. Cut the paper into long stripes. Dip strips of paper into the paste and stick to the balloon until it is entirely covered except for a fist size area by the top (from where the balloon will be removed once the paper has dried). Repeat this process for 2—3 layers. Set the balloon aside to dry in a safe, cool area (may take several days depending on the temperature). Once the paper has dried, pop the balloon and remove it completely. The piñata can then be painted (with non-toxic paint), stuffed with hay and/or treats, and given to animals that do not eat paper, then sit back and watch the fun! Some animals have been even known to wear these lovely piñatas as hats.



Then last month keepers met to build bamboo wind chimes. These chimes take a bit of prep work before they can be made. Different lengths of bamboo must be cut, then holes need to be drilled through the top where either cable or rope will go through. You will also need cable (the strength of the cable depends on the animal the chime is being made for), sisal rope, cable/wire cutter, cable thimbles and screws, or crimp clamps and a crimper. Once you have determined what species of animal you are making the chimes for, you can start threading the rope or cable through the bamboo you have selected. Chimes can be decorated to taste by adding small pieces of bamboo or rope knots between each bamboo. Rope chimes will be held together with knots at each end, whereas cable chimes will need to have the thimbles and screws or clamps at each end.



On June 7, keepers will meet to make enrichment items made out of fire hose. There will be hammocks, balls, and hose toys for animals to enjoy.

The zoo keeper enrichment group meets every month. Email us for the schedule!

National Zoo Keeper Week Reality, continued...

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gage in activities that promote AAZK as a professional organization.

We are currently working on a press release to send to all the AAZK chapters. An activity kit will also be provided, giving chapters a few ideas of how they can observe and promote this well-deserved recognition.

As the need to protect and preserve our wildlife and vanishing habitats has increased, our role as educators and wildlife ambassadors has become essential. During the week of July 15-21, celebrate National Zoo Keeper Week; both you and your animals deserve the recognition.

Keeper Corner

Featuring Jeannine Carlin, GIS Specialist for SD Zoo's Horticulture Department and SD AAZK Member



As a new section to our newsletter, the Keeper Corner is designed to highlight volunteer activities of SD AAZK members. Many AAZK members spend much of their "free time" working with conservation groups and projects. As a thank you from SD AAZK, we would like to highlight who they are, the work that they do, and donate some of our chapter funds to help their cause. If you or anyone you know is involved in conservation projects, email us at TheKeeperSDAAZK@cox.net. We would like to share the important work that they are doing!

It was at my first AAZK meeting that I met Bob Cisneros. He told me about the California Wolf Center (CWC) after I had given him my spiel about wanting to get more involved working with wildlife.

I have been a volunteer there for over a year now. I am involved mostly with animal care but I participate in all aspects of the organization such as education, development, and facilities maintenance. The CWC is located in Julian, about an hour east from San Diego, and is an education, research, and breeding facility for gray wolves. There are 28 wolves in total, 11 of which are of the subspecies Mexican gray wolf, which is one of the rarest land mammals on earth.

The CWC is a Species Survival Plan (SSP) captive facility, which means they raise Mexican wolves specifically for breeding and reintroduction purposes. The Wolf Center is 1 of 49 such facilities in the country, which in total house about 300 Mexican wolves. The CWC participates with other SSP facilities and agencies as part of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program (MWRP), which is a cooperative effort between various federal and state agencies and tribal entities working to reintroduce Mexican wolves into the southwest.

Recently, I had the opportunity to get even more involved and extend my volunteer activities and skills beyond the Wolf Center into hands-on field experience.

Through the CWC I had the privilege of participating first-hand in the MWRP out in the field. I was asked to help in the translocation of two wolves in New Mexico. Working conjointly with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, we transferred the wolves into the Gila National Forest from another wilderness area. The whole process was very interesting and quite an experience. We used mules to pack everything 14 miles deep into the wilderness, including the wolves! There we built a temporary holding pen to acclimate the wolves to their surroundings and then monitored the wolves for the next week and a half using radio telemetry and visual checks.

There were two wolves, a male and a pregnant female, which were released from the pen just before the expected birth date to increase the likelihood that they would den in the area. As of May 14, both wolves were located using flight radio telemetry and hopefully will continue to do well and thrive with their pups.

A year ago, I could've only hoped to be in the position that I am in now, working with an endangered species out in the field. My initial desire to get more involved with wildlife has led me to this point and I will be continuing to work with the MWRP.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities at the CWC or about the MWRP, please visit the website links below. The CWC requires a volunteer orientation and a minimum of one Saturday a month involvement.

www.californiawolfcenter.org

www.azgfd.gov/wolf

www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf



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The San Diego AAZK Chapter

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Send us your email address so we can notify you when the latest issue of *The Keeper* is on the web site.

CALENDAR

LOCAL EVENTS

JUNE 5, 2007: AI Toth presents "Work at Peru Zoo." 2:30 social, 3:00 p.m. presentation at the Zoo's Rondavel

JULY 24, 2007: Kibale Community Fuel Project in Uganda. 5:30 social, 6:00 p.m. presentation at the zoo's Rondavel. Visit the project at <http://mbstern.googlepages.com/kibalecommunityfuelwoodproject>

AUGUST 4, 2007: Kobey's Swap Meet. Meet at Kobey's at 6:30 a.m. Volunteers needed!

SEPTEMBER TBA, 2007. Photo caravan at the WAP. More info to come.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

The Animal Behavior Society's 44th Annual Meeting: July 21—25, 2007 in Burlington, VT. More info at www.animalbehavior.org/ABS/Program/.

8th International Conference on Environmental Enrichment: August 5—10, 2007. Hosted by Schonbrunn Zoo, Vienna, Austria. More info at www.zoovienna.at/icee2007

BIERZS The Symposium 2007: August 24—26, 2007. Hosted by Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, CA. More info at www.bearkeepers.net/bierzs.htm

IV International Symposium on Breeding Birds in Captivity: 5 day event in honor of Dr. Jean Delacour. September 12—16, 2007. Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Theme: "Conservation Through Aviculture." More info at www.isbbc.org or write to ISBBC

637316 St. Vincent-Sydenham Townline, Meaford, Ontario, Canada, N4L 1W5 (+ 1.416.910.AVES or + 1.604.866.AVES).

AAZK National Conference: September 30—October 4, 2007, Moody Gardens in Galveston, TX. More info at www.gcaazk.org.

Past SD AAZK presentations on DVD: If you missed an AAZK presentation, you can find a copy at the ZSSD Library. For more info, contact the ZSSD Library.

Go to the SD AAZK web site, www.sdaazk.org, to find out more about upcoming events !