



To promote and establish good relationships among professional zoo keepers.

To promote and establish a means to stimulate incentive and greater interest in the zoo keeping profession.

To support deserving conservation projects that include educating the general public about the need for preserving our natural resources and animal life through these worthwhile efforts.

To establish materials beneficial to zoo keeper education.

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The Keeper

The American Association of Zoo Keepers San Diego Chapter Quarterly Newsletter – Fall 2010

President's Message

By Yvette Kemp, SD AAZK President



If you haven't noticed, the National AAZK Conference that we are hosting August 24 through 28, 2011 has been the main focus of most of our activities lately. Many of our events have been revolving around fundraising and getting our name known in the community. We have been working hard, but it has also been exciting and educational.

The SD AAZK board is definitely learning skills we had never realized we'd be using. Who would have thought that as keepers we'd need to learn about marketing, fundraising, creating logos, contract negotiations, and advertising? I've even learned how to put together and manage a website thanks to Kevin Hawke and Caitlin Kemp at Geary Interactive Advertising Agency, who have donated their time and resources to SD AAZK! All these things are great skills to have and can be used long after the conference has passed.

And above you can see our conference logo. It took a lot of brainstorming and reworking to finally get what we wanted. Thanks to the help of Keri Kress, a graphic designer who volunteered her time and services, we were able get just what we were looking for. Our theme? The four words in the logo say it all: inspiration, dedication, conservation, innovation. Characteristics we believe describe what AAZK and its members represent.

I invite you to join us as we continue working towards the conference and San Diego AAZK's mission. We are proud of what we have been able to accomplish throughout the years and believe that our members are the forefront of what animal care professionals have become for the environment and conservation: an inspiration through dedication and innovation.

Thank you San Diego AAZK members! We look forward to your continued input.

Meet the New San Diego AAZK Board Members

Recently we asked for your input and vote regarding 7 AAZK members who were interested in joining the San Diego chapter board. Thanks to your feedback, they were all welcomed to the board as supporting members. Here we invite you to meet the new board members who have already become an important part of who we are as they have all already taken on essential tasks as board members and will be vital during the 2011 conference.

Maureen O Duryee has been an employee with the Zoological Society for 33 years and is a Senior Animal Trainer with Animal Connections at Back Stage Pass. She has been a SD AAZK member off and on for many years. She has always believed in education and sees the upcoming conference as a great educational opportunity for her colleagues. Maureen was of great assistance during the last ABMA conference and is interested in raising funds for the 2011 conference. She and Lorena Walton were the photographers the day we stepped out onto the field at PetCo Park for National Zoo Keeper Week (see photos on our website and Facebook page). One of her ideas is the current photo contest SD AAZK is holding. Visit our website's Events section to learn how you can participate!

Juli Borowski has a Bachelor's degree in Zoology from the University of Wisconsin and has worked with exotic animals for about 8 years, 5 of which were spent doing keeper work. She has worked with animals in a variety of settings. In the past year and a half, Juli has been at the San Diego Zoo, training and keeping pandas and has been cross-trained to work some of the other Sun Bear Forest strings. She feels that working at the San Diego Zoo has already improved she keeper and training skills and that there isn't a better place for her to explore the ins and outs of how a zoo functions. "Here, I am able to be a part of one of the most influential and involved conservation teams in the world. We are constantly looking for new and better ways to care for our animals. Working in such a place also allows me to research possible future career paths. I strive to learn as much as I can about my job and the animals that I care for by becoming as involved as possible within the zoo".

By becoming an AAZK board member, Juli believes she could meet more keepers, learn from them, and further develop my keeper skills. Her goal is to help prepare for the upcoming SD AAZK conference by being more active in choosing interesting and educational speakers and activities for future AAZK events. "Our zoo has so many people who are involved in a myriad of conservation efforts and training and enrichment projects. I believe that we should share as much information as we can across keeper teams and departments at the zoo. AAZK could be a great outlet for that".

Christine Fenwick is a new keeper at the Wild Animal Park and has been a National member of AAZK since 2007. She has been involved in selecting pre and post trip activities for the conference as well as transportation needs.

Holly Hummel is a keeper in sun bear forest at the San Diego Zoo. She has worked as a keeper since 2003. Her favorite animals are lemurs and she enjoys participating in conservation projects in Central America. She has volunteered on the National AAZK Conservation Committee since 2007 and first joined SD AAZK in 2004.

Holly wanted to join the AAZK board to help plan, organize, and assist with the National AAZK conference in 2011. "I am also looking forward to working with the board on planning

future speakers and special events for our members. As zoo keepers we have the potential to do great things for animals in zoos and the wild. I am excited to be a part of a great thing”.

Hali O'Connor is a senior keeper at the San Diego Zoo. She has worked as a zoo keeper for over 12 years, 8 of which have been at the San Diego Zoo. “I am all too aware that our jobs are more than an 8 hour day with core beliefs that encompass our whole lives. I’ve always been a member and supporter of AAZK and even served 4 years as treasurer in my previous zoo, Omaha’s Henry Doorly. I would like to get back into being a part of AAZK and the promotion of professional development and education for all the amazing and dedicated animal care professionals in the world.” Hosting the 2011 AAZK conference is a huge endeavor of which Hali is already assisting, but preferred to make her commitment to AAZK a more permanent decision. Thank you Hali!

Linda Henry is Supervisor of Birds in the Bird Department at SeaWorld San Diego. Linda graduated from Humboldt State University and has worked for the State of California as a Seasonal Park Aide at Palomar Mountain State Park and Cuyamaca Rancho State Park, as a Horse Park Aide at Los Caballos, and as an Animal Health/Veterinary Technician. She began her career at SeaWorld in 1983 incubating and hatching penguin eggs, then rearing penguin chicks during ground-breaking quarantine projects.

Linda is not only a membership of SD AAZK, but also AZA, National AAZK, PEAC, OWCN, San Diego River Park Foundation and the Penguin TAG. We are grateful to have her on our board!

Lindsey King knew zoo keeping was her dream since her first scoop of hippo poop at Busch Gardens Adventure Camp when she was just 16. Since then she has focused all her work and schooling toward that goal. She received a B.S. in Animal Science from the University of Vermont and has held internships with the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore, Tiger Creek Wildlife Refuge and The Oregon Zoo. Her paid keeping experience began at the 16 acre Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown, PA; a small facility with a very diverse collection. Lindsey has been working at the San Diego Zoo for 4 1/2 years. She started in the polar hoofstock area before spending a breeding/cubing year with the Giant Pandas. Currently she works on the Sun Bear Forest team, focused mostly in the Polar Bear Area.

“I have been a national AAZK member since becoming a keeper and have enjoyed attending our local chapter events over the last few years. I recently became more involved with the chapter by attending a few board meetings and helping out with BFR. I am really looking forward to contributing even more as we move toward our conference year. I'm ready to tap into skills I don't even know I have and work on getting more support from our exceptional keeper staff.”

We are excited to have all these great, professional people join the San Diego team! San Diego AAZK will only get better through the excellence of its members.

Linda, Lindsey, Hali, Maureen, Holly, Juli and Christine are joining the existing board as supporting members. As part of their duties, they will assist as committee chairs for the conference and provide assistance for all SD AAZK activities as needed.

Welcome new board members!

Good-bye and Thank You Nicki Boyd

By Yvette Kemp, SD AAZK President

For those of you who know Nicki, you know AAZK has always been a part of her life. When she recently approached the board to let us know she needed to resign, we were deeply saddened, but understood her need to reduce the number of things she is involved in. And that is just the thing, Nicki is involved in MANY things. She juggles a successful career, motherhood, and marriage while being involved in projects she is passionate about. We are happy and grateful that Nicki has been a part of AAZK. Because of her, the chapter has been able to accomplish much and reach many goals. Thanks for all you have done. We'll miss you (but be sure we'll be "consulting" with you every now and then).

Tell us a little about yourself and your work with the zoo. *I have worked at the zoo for 18 years. I was hired in 1992, 2 weeks after graduating from Mesa College's Animal Health Technician program. Before that I had also graduated from Moorpark's Exotic Animal Training and Management Program. I recently finished my Bachelor's in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.*

I have always wanted to work with animals and when I went to college I knew I wanted to work at the San Diego Zoo. I have lived in San Diego since I was 8 years old and my mom used to take me to the zoo all the time. I always had lots of pets, dogs, cats, ferrets, parrots, snakes, and my step grandfather owned a horse ranch in Chino.

San Diego Zoo is world renowned and a great facility it was a no brainer that it was a great place to work with animals.

In college I volunteered for C.R.E.S. at the Primate Research Pad and did my vet tech internship at the Wild Animal Park. I was hired in the Children's Zoo first, then spent much of the summer and fall working with the Behavior Department, mostly at Wegeforth, but became cross trained at Hunte Amphitheater. Then I was offered a full time position at the Children's Zoo. I also worked for 6 months as a hospital keeper. My positions have been keeper, senior keeper, Team Area Lead, Animal Care Supervisor, Animal Care Manager and now the Behavior Husbandry Manager.

When did you first join AAZK and why? *I joined AAZK in 1992 right when I started, I volunteered at the AAZK conference that was being held here in San Diego and I was hooked. I recently resigned from the board but not until I spent all 18 years of my career at the zoo as an AAZK board member. I held positions as Secretary, President, Treasurer and supporting board member. I have always enjoyed the ability to do our own fundraisers as keepers to support valuable conservation efforts of our choice. I also love attending conferences; I can't wait for the one here in San Diego in 2011.*

What has been your favorite thing about/moment with AAZK? *There have been some great conferences, great lifetime friends made on the board of directors, but I think getting recognition for raising the most money at Bowling for Rhinos has been my favorite thing! A close second is writing checks to conservation from the hard earned money the AAZK members have worked for. Oh yeah and Wine Steals is also on the top of the list for sure!*

What other professional organizations do you belong to? *I am currently the president of the Red Panda Network, their focus is more on saving habitat for wild red pandas, and I am the Chief Financial Officer for the Animal Behavior Management Alliance, which focuses more animal*

training of any species. They along with AAZK are all important in professional development and conservation. I wish I had more time to do even more with conservation and field research.

Why are you leaving the SD AAZK board? *This has been a very difficult decision, I will always support AAZK in San Diego and nationally, but with 3 children ages 7, 10 and 13, I find it hard to attend after-work meetings and felt I wasn't giving my all as a board member. I really think there is a strong board of directors here in San Diego and that it was my time (after 18 years) to let someone else experience all the great things I did as a board member.*

Do you plan to remain an active SD AAZK member? Why? *Absolutely, Yvette almost talked me into staying on the board recently (-: I think San Diego has done a lot for the profession of zoo keeping, from the start of AAZK so many years ago, to the hard work Bob Cisneros put in as AAZK president to make National Zoo Keeper Week official. I will also be an active member, attending meetings, helping with fund raisers (especially bowling for rhinos) and support the keepers any way I can.*

I just wanted to thank everyone who has supported AAZK and given up their time to be on the Board of Directors, your dedication is appreciated and we have one of the strongest chapters in the National AAZK organization, keep up the great work! It has been an honor!

The San Diego Chapter of AAZK would like to thank Nicki for all her hard works and dedication. Losing both Nicki and Bob Cisneros will be hard, but thanks to all the work they have done in the past we have a great chance of continuing AAZK's mission.

Thank you Nicki and Bob!



Cheetah Outreach Program with Annie Beckhelling

By Laurie Brogan, SD AAZK Secretary

First, let me introduce you to our guest speaker. Her name is Annie Beckhelling. She is the founder and trustee of Cheetah Outreach Program, the vice-chair of the National Cheetah Conservation Forum, and serves on the education and captive cheetah committees. The Cheetah Outreach Program started in November of 1996 to bring the cheetahs into full focus of both rural and urban communities in South Africa. Cheetah Outreach has raised over 35 cheetah cubs, with no mortalities. Some serve as ambassador cats in South Africa, United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, introducing many thousands to the wonder and majesty of these great African cats.

Annie launched the first cheetah school outreach program, which is dedicated to the survival of the free range cheetahs. Today, Cheetah Outreach is the education coordinator for the Global Cheetah Forum, using the cheetah as a learning tool. Students are bused to the facility. For many, this is their first introduction to their valuable wildlife heritage. Linking literacy and natural science, locals are learning why it is so important to protect and save all of their natural resource which include the cheetah.

Since 2005, Annie has coordinated the South African Anatolian Sheppard guard dog non-lethal predator control program within free-ranging cheetah territories, in partnership with the DeWildt Cheetah and Wildlife Trust and more recently, with the Endangered Wildlife Trust. She is also introducing the program to red meat retailers and suppliers in South Africa and has coordinated a successful pilot for a major retail chain supplying red meat.

The cheetah is restricted to very small numbers and areas. There needs to be at least 50 cats for a good genetic make-up. Unfortunately the cats are stuck in the areas and are unable to get to one another for breeding. Annie's research area is in Cape Town, where drought and other predators are a threat to the cheetah's survival. But the biggest threat are the farmers. Farmers set lethal traps to kill cheetahs, but these traps also kill a high numbers of non-targeted animals.

To create a win-win situation for both the farmers and the cheetahs, in 2005 Annie paired the farmers with the Anatolian Sheppard dog. She chose this breed because of its strong guarding abilities, it will actually put itself between the livestock and the intruder. The dog moves quickly, has a thick coat and is very maternal, even the males. They are neutered to prevent highbred breeding. At the young age of 6-8 weeks, the dogs are placed with a farmer where they will stay for the rest of their life.

Before the dogs were placed, 1187 livestock were lost annually; after placement, 6 were lost! Upon placement, the dogs are checked once a month to make sure they are healthy, cared for and working out. If all is well, then they are checked just once a year. Dense brush gives cover to the apex predators, but only 2 dogs have been lost to predators in 2005. Thirty-five farms with dogs had regular sightings of cheetahs passing through, but not one has lost any livestock.

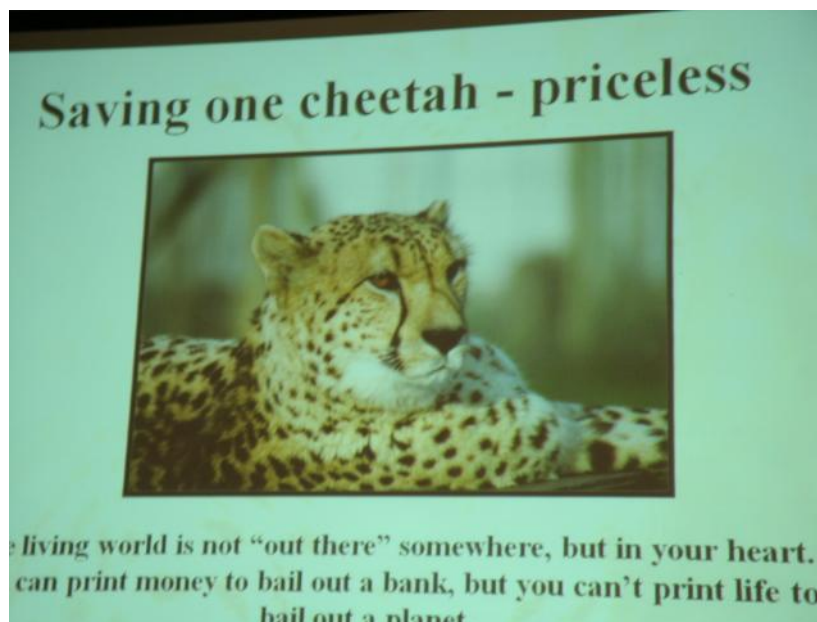
Partnering with the red meat retailers has also proved how well this program works. In one year farmers killed hundreds of jackals and caracals in traps set for cheetahs. Long term that system does not work, as jackals are very smart and learn to stay away from traps and continue to kill the livestock.

Six dogs on farms have reduced livestock lost from 30% to 2.6%, with zero caracals and jackals killed! Now Annie is beginning to place the dogs with high priced game animals such as sable and nyala antelope. She is not sure as of yet how this will work out, but felt it was something they needed to try. She started the dogs with springbok and the springbok learned to stay behind the dogs. The dogs accept the livestock as their pack and will defend them with their very life.

The key to sustainable success is through education, from the very young to the very old. Annie knew that without the support of the local community leaders and citizens, the Cheetah Outreach program would not be successful. A fellowship with the Smithsonian Institute helped train teachers to teach the importance of non-lethal predator control and the value of predators to tourism. Half the population lives on less than one dollar per day, has no electricity, and no clean water. Cheetah Outreach programs have been brought to any and all disadvantaged schools, making the program accessible to many who may not be able to participate.

The price of feeding a dog for a year equals to 3 calves or 13 lambs or 17 goats. Saving 1 cheetah? PRICELESS!

Annie does have the help and support of many organizations and people, but she is a prime example of how one person can make a difference! She has great passion and a strong commitment to saving the cheetah for future generations to see running wild and free. She is an inspiration to me and a role model. It was a great pleasure to hear her speak and to be able to talk with her! I look forward to our future meetings.



SD AAZK's Bowling for Rhinos and Conference Fundraiser

By Kymberlee Nelson, WAP Mammal Keeper and SD AAZK Fundraising Chair

I want to thank everyone who supported San Diego AAZK in this years bowling event. Whether you bowled, pledged your support or just came out and cheered the bowlers on, you helped to make this one of the most successful bowling nights yet! The night was filled with exciting prizes, competitive bowling matches, yummy treats and I must say a lot of beer!

This year's bowling event supported two very worthy causes. 50% of all monies raised have been donated to the AAZK Rhino conservation efforts and the other half will go to support the 2011 AAZK National Conference to be held here in San Diego. Both causes support conservation and animal care in a big way! Bowling For Rhinos (BFR) funds support Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya, Ujung Kulon National Park in Java, Indonesia and Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park (BBSNP) and Way Kambas in Sumatra. These sanctuaries not only save rhinos but also these entire ecosystems! The AAZK National Conference attracts delegates from all over the world and is a venue by which keepers are educated and commended on the latest in animal care and conservation through a series of presentations and workshops.

This year we are thrilled to announce that we raised a grand total of \$14,350.50! That means \$7,175.25 has been donated to BFR and the rest will help to ensure that delegates to the 2011 National Conference leave San Diego feeling that they have learned a lot, had a fabulous time and are excited to share their experiences with their home institutions. Additionally, Bob Weise, Director of Life Sciences graciously showed his support of the conference and matched SD AAZK's portion!

I have to mention that the bake sale raised a total of \$233.75, and that's from 50 cent cupcakes and cookies. Thank goodness we all have a sweet tooth! Yvette Kemp brought in a whopping \$2,144.50 in support of our causes and with that won a one night stay at the Westin Horton Plaza. Another event worth mentioning is the 50/50 raffle, I wish I had the luck of Bill Whipple, he should be buying lottery tickets, as he won for the second year in a row and took home \$460!

Bowling for Rhinos has donated \$3.5million to rhino conservation since 1990. San Diego has donated \$155,213 to this amazing conservation cause making us one of the leading supporting chapters. None of this would have been possible without our many wonderful sponsors. We would like to thank Westin Horton Plaza, Westin Pasadena, Sheraton Hotel and Marina, Walter Todd Salon, Sea World, World Famous, Islands Restaurant on Balboa, Mission Valley Hooters, Phil's BBQ, Café on Park, California Wolf Center, and the Zoological Society of San Diego for their donations to our event.

We look forward to your continued support of AAZK and can't wait to see you all next year!

SD AAZK's "Dining Out" Fundraiser Featuring

Blind Lady Ale House 3416 Adams Avenue, SD 92116 (619) 255-2491 web-site www.blindladyalehouse.com

By Laurie Brogan, SDZ Bird Keeper and SD AAZK Secretary

Every month, SD AAZK is offering a fundraiser in the form of going out to eat, drink and be merry. We are selecting a local establishment each month who is willing to donate a percentage of the proceeds made to SD AAZK. As you know, we are hosting the 2011 National AAZK Conference and this is a fun and easy way to assist in raising funds. We invite you to join us. Be sure to keep an eye out for the information!

If you were not there, you missed a fun, fun fundraising event. On Sunday August 25th at the Blind Lady Ale House, about 25-30 folks met for great food, wonderful beers and stimulating conversation! And it WASN'T all about work! Here is a brief summary of who and what the Blind Lady Ale House is about.

Lee Chase graduated from UC Davis with a degree in Malting and Brewing Science and soon after passed the prestigious Institute of Brewing Associate Membership Exam to become a Master Brewer. Lee went on to work with three breweries and a yeast lab before committing to what was then a start-up operation called Stone Brewing Company. Over the nine+ years that Lee was with Stone, they grew from a small time brewery to an internationally-recognized icon of craft brewing. He currently works with numerous Breweries in the USA, as well as Canada, Costa Rica, India, Australia, Africa, and Norway.

Jeff Motch is an award winning graphic designer whose work has graced the covers of bands such as Jack Johnson, blink-182, G. Love and Steve Poltz, he has designed for the San Diego Padres, Patagonia, several local restaurants as well as created fine art posters. He has co-owned his design firm, Lively and Motch, for five years.

Clea Hantman has written eleven books for major publishers. Before that she owned her own successful retail business in downtown San Diego for five years. She's written for every major publication in San Diego and her work has appeared in dozens of national magazines.

Jennifer Chase has a Master's Degree, in Communication. While putting herself through school, she managed several restaurants, bars, and cafes. Jennifer, along with husband Lee own and manage three rental properties in the area.

OUR PLAN: To offer hand-crafted and tasty organic salads, Neapolitan-style pizza (*pizza napoletana*), beer & wine to the families, couples and singles of Normal Heights (and beyond) to eat and drink and enjoy.

The BLAH opened in 2008. One of the biggest contributions that they make to the community is supporting non-profit organizations, such as your own San Diego American Association of Zookeepers. They contributed 20% of everyone's bill to SDAAZK! And you didn't even have to be a part of the zoo-world! All you had to do was mention you were there for the fundraiser and 20% of your bill went to us! We made a total of \$75.00!

With or without a fundraiser, please stop by and enjoy the great food and beers and friendly folks! Thanks again to Lee, Jeff, Jennifer, and Clea for an extra special night!

National Zoo Keeper Week!

By Kymberlee Nelson, Tina Hunter, Kirstin Clapham, Heidi Trowbridge, and Yvette Kemp

This year's National Zoo Keeper Week was filled with non-stop events. Thanks to PetCo Park, many ZSSD departments, SeaWorld San Diego and the keepers themselves, we were busy working and having fun.

The week started on July 17, when PetCo Park honored keepers and animal care staff. Representative from the Zoo and Wild Animal Park, CA Wolf Center, SeaWorld San Diego, and other local facilities were selected to go on the field. They also brought some of their animal friends: a cheetah and dog ambassador, a prehensile tailed porcupine, a great horned owl, and a 12 foot long boa constrictor. That night the Padres beat the AZ Diamondbacks, most likely because of the inspiration brought by the keepers and animal energy on the field.

NZKW officially kicked off at the Wild Animal with an HR sponsored pizza lunch on Monday July 19 at 10:30 am. Hunte Pavilion was filled with keepers from CHS-Mammals, CHS-Elephants, CHS-Birds, Animal Behavior and Education. Speeches by Bob McClure, Tim Mulligan and others thanked the keepers for all they do! In addition to pizza, breadsticks, salad, and drinks HR raffled off a variety of t-shirts, sweatshirts and mugs.

On Tues. July 20th, the mammal department at the WAP had a potluck with quite a turn out. Of course, there were more desserts than any other kind of food, but most zookeepers are okay with that. Between Gloria Kendall's saffron rice, Marcia Redding's shrimp and pasta casserole and Julie Anderson's red velvet cake balls dipped in chocolate (deadly), we were set and stuffed. We also had a raffle drawing for a lunch on us, which Jake won. The following day, WAP human resources hosted a great buffet, happy hour at On the Border. It was great catching up with existing friends and making new ones. From 3pm-5pm keepers from all departments made their way to the patio for delicious fajitas and ice cold beverages! Thanks again to Stephanie, Becky and all the HR staff for hosting this event!

Thursday, we hosted keeper games at Malawi Picnic Grove. We had the ping pong ball scoop, the ping pong ball toss and a watermelon eating contest (in which there was no contest against Kevin Yates). There were prizes, fruit and chocolate (they cancel each other out), a continuous game of "washer toss", while Dave Moore included some visitor kids in a roping lesson. We hope to be able to do this again next year with new games and new prizes.

Keeper displays were set up in front of the Animal Care Center Thursday to Sunday. A big thank you to the bird keepers and the volunteers for manning the tables and explaining to guests that there is so much more to be being a keeper than meets the eye! The bird and mammal departments displayed a variety of tools, photos and animal artifacts. Once each day, guests were treated to a special impromptu animal encounter courtesy of the Animal Behavior department. Of course there was also a lot of AAZK fare to be found and we hope our guests learned a little more about the love AAZK members have for conservation and wildlife even outside of their day jobs!

Overall I have heard that the keepers enjoyed the laid back vibe the week offered at the park. Their only complaint is that we can't wear the okapi t-shirts anymore, who's up for a casual Friday?

At the Zoo, things were just as busy. On Monday, July 19, HR sponsored a breakfast John Dunlap and Carmi Penny along with others commended keepers for their work. HR again showed their appreciation and generosity by hosting a happy hour at Baja Betty's. Always a favorite with keepers, there was a good turn out.

On Friday, July 23 SD AAZK and the animal care managers from each department showed their appreciation by hosting a Pat & Oscar's pizza with salad lunch. Then it was time to play games! First it was the chubby bunny contest. Now talk about a good laugh; contestants and spectators alike were laughing hard for this one. Debbie Hewitt from CZ was the grand prize winner of \$50 gift card from the curators office. She was able to stuff 16, yes 16, marshmallows in her mouth and still say chubby bunny. Josh from APC was a very close 2nd, while Crystal came in 3rd. Then it was off to the hot dog eating contest. Everyone seemed a little concerned but in the end the 3 contestants each ate 5 hot dogs with Ron Ringer being the grand prize winner eating them the fastest (3 minutes), winning \$100 gift card donated from the curator's office. Bob Cisneros won 2nd prize, which he gave to his 3rd place competitor, Brian Optiz. So Brian walked away with a \$50 gift card plus an Albert's Restaurant gift certificate for \$25! Lucky Brian!

There were also many raffle prizes that were donated from the zoo's food service department, merchandising, the animal departments, and curator's office. Not bad pickings for the keepers.

Then throughout the week the zoo keepers and trainers also shared their stories and experiences with zoo guests. Every day, keepers participated in the keeper booth bringing props from their areas, and enthusiasm for everyone. It was great to watch them. And volunteers were essential in helping man the tent and speaking with guests (I know we could not have done it without their help).

I know everyone was very supportive of the week's events and it nice to see just how much keepers really do mean to everyone. The amount of gifts and activities the various departments donated for the keeper raffle was nice to see. Plus the number of people who attended the Padres game on July 17th to see the keepers on the field was nice to see.

Thanks to everyone for everything that was accomplished that week. I know it was just focusing on keeper week but the reality is that there is support every week and we appreciate it.

SeaWorld San Diego also joined the Keeper Week activities by inviting keepers to attend a special behind the scenes tour. Keepers Kirstin Clapham and Heidi Trowbridge had a great experience there. Read on to hear about it!

It was a cool, cloudy afternoon in August and many of us keepers were gathering for a behind the scenes tour at Sea World; one of the many great AAZK's National Zookeepers Week activities! We were all excited to see how a fellow professional organization cares for and trains their animals. Not many of us have worked with marine mammals and were very curious about the differences (and similarities) between caring for them and terrestrial mammals. Our guides separated us into 3 groups of about 8 people each, then we all headed off in different directions. Not to worry though, we all went to the same areas, just at different times to prevent overcrowding and to make the visits more up-close and personal.

Our tour guide's name was Mary and as we walked over to the sea otter exhibit she told us that she was a bird keeper who has been with Sea World for 21 years. In the back holding area we met Keeper Keith and Kate, a 17 year old sea otter who was lounging in what he called her "bed"; a salt-water filled plastic drum that had been cut in half length-wise. She was floating on her back, half asleep and just adorable. Most of her head was covered with white, creamy colored fur. We learned that as sea otters get older, the fur on their heads gets lighter. Kate eventually woke up due to our noisy chattering, slipped into her pool, swam around and proceeded to eat shrimp that had been tossed in earlier. At one point she came up to the fence and acknowledged our presence. We were simply delighted with her sweet little face and front feet. We all agreed, it's hard to beat that kind of cuteness!

We then walked over to the animal care/quarantine area, where we met Mark, who has been there an impressive 34 years! He is part of the rescue/rehab team and shared a lot of information as he showed us around the area. This off-exhibit area houses the wild rescued animals, breeding animals and animals that are rotated out of petting pools. Many, such as sea lion pups and harbor seals, are being rehabilitated for release back into the wild, so human contact is kept to a minimum for their future safety. We met a rescued pilot whale named Sully who, because he is not a release candidate, is currently in an "adjustment period". The trainers are helping Sully to adapt to his new surroundings, training him for exhibitry and are happy to report he is doing remarkably well.

A little side note... we learned that in order to maintain all the marine animals in their collection, Sea World San Diego feeds out approximately 600-1000 lbs of fish, (mostly smelt), per day. Wow!

Mark informed us that "stranding season" is March-July and that Sea World comes to the aid of beached animals along 60 miles of shoreline. Many of us realize that native wildlife struggles right here in our own backyards and on our beaches and alone we are not equipped to do anything to help. However, knowing that Sea World and other organized rescue/rehab organizations are out there should give us a sense of relief that these animals will get the help they need.

Sea World also breeds sea turtles, though the males and females are currently separated. The eggs are hatched on site and the "turtlelings" are kept in individual floating plastic laundry baskets to prevent injury and to aid in their management. We all thought that this was a very ingenious way to raise them. Taking pictures of this layout didn't capture the full size (an entire pool!) of this "turtle grid". It was truly amazing.

This day was proving to be a great day. Our next stop was inside the events tent where we were greeted by Kelly and a small leash-trained river otter named "Princess Buffy". Kelly has been at Sea World for 25 years and is one of their Interaction Ambassadors. You could tell that she and Buffy were veterans by how comfortable and well mannered they were around people. We all sat at a table while Buffy sat in a chair eating shrimp. She then proceeded to hop up on the table to explore and eat peanuts. Otters are very busy and have a particularly peculiar way of eating so

this was so funny to watch up close.

During our visit it was nice to see a variety of creative, interactive toys and enrichment items that can be used to display an animal's natural foraging, hunting, and social behaviors. In talking with the trainers, we learned that there are very few differences in training marine mammals and terrestrial mammals. Both respond well to positive reinforcement, targets, clickers, whistles, tactile, verbal and visual cues. The most important thing that was agreed upon is that we all need a strong bond with the animal to be successful.

Our final stop sent us hiking half way around the world to the Antarctic penguin enclosure, where we were escorted out into the on-exhibit viewing area. As we stepped inside the 28 degree environment (may I remind you, that we were all in summer attire) it got COLD... fast. The enclosure was practically dark, since it is the time of year that brings the Antarctic winter, where the sun is so low on the horizon it is barely visible. Because of the season, no flash cameras were allowed so as not confuse the internal time clock of the penguins. We met and were shown some differences between Emperor, King and Macaroni penguins, a personal favorite. Keepers have it tough maintaining this exhibit. Cleaning entails hosing, melting, scrubbing and blowing in new snow, one section at a time. To our surprise the penguins were more affectionate to their keepers than we had guessed. One particular King penguin thought Mary was his mate! Some species, including this one, mate for life. Wow, was she lucky! A forever love affair with a man (or in this case a penguin) forever dressed up in black and white attire.

Though the animals we work with are "worlds apart" it was nice to note the similarities in our daily routines and animal management. We are looking forward to the next opportunity to get together, swap stories and share ideas. The San Diego Zoological Society will extend the same courtesy to Sea World keepers and trainers by inviting them over to the Zoo to learn about our terrestrial species and see what we (and they) can do.

Thanks to SeaWorld San Diego for giving us the opportunity to see how your animal care people work. It's an experience we won't forget!

And to rap up the week, this incredible e-mail came to us through our Customer Service "**Contact Us**" on the Zoo's Web site. Thank you to this writer and all the other people who expressed their thanks and appreciation not just during National Zoo Keeper Week, but throughout the year. We do have a great job and truly enjoy it.

"Hello, I just want to express my appreciation for the article in the July 2010 Zoonooz on Celebrating Zoo Keepers. I've been a Zoological Society member off and on for years and I've never heard of National Zoo Keeper Week, I must have missed that memo??"

Anyway, as I was reading the article I realized how much I appreciate what the zoo keepers do, not just for the animals, but also for myself and others. I'm sure every child that visits a zoo dreams of being a zoo keeper at one point during their visit, but, in reality it is not an easy lifestyle (I say lifestyle because its not a JOB, its a love and it can consume you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, your heart becomes attached). It is a lifestyle that requires unselfish love, dedication, perseverance, patience, humility and the willingness to get down and dirty.

I came to realize that so much of the animal knowledge I have is from visiting either the Wild Animal Park or the San Diego Zoo. Listening to the keepers or staff talk about the animals while on the tram, during a show
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or during one of the up-close meet and greets with animals. And, every keeper is different and I often find that they put their own personal creativity to what they are teaching. I never get tired of visiting one of the parks or listening to the keepers or reading the newest issue of Zoonooz.

Please, express my appreciation to the keepers, let them know they do NOT go unnoticed, they are NOT unappreciated. Tell them they are the heart of the Zoo and Wild Animal Park. Tell them we DO listen to what they say, we do care about what they do and they really DO make a difference in the lives of the animals they care for and the people they come in contact with. How many people can say they have affected humans and animals in a positive, life changing and often life saving way? The Zoo keepers can! Thank You.”

If you would like to see photos from that week, visit our website at www.sdaazk.org and click on our Facebook link. Because there were so many pictures we want to share with you, it was easier to place them in photo albums on Facebook.



Volunteer Work With SD AAZK

By Laurie Brogan, SD AAZK Secretary

We are looking for everyone and anyone that can volunteer time to help the San Diego chapter of AAZK as we host the 2011 Conference! Luckily we have had several zoo keepers sign up to volunteer, so they will soon be getting a few "To-Do" lists from us.

The great thing about volunteering is just that, you get to volunteer the amount of time you can give us. We are looking for folks to help with just about everything. You may not think you have the skills to help, but that is just crazy talk!

And if you happen to be bilingual! Te necesitamos!

Volunteer opportunities include:

- 🍁 Fundraising
- 🍁 Set-up
- 🍁 Catering
- 🍁 Registration
- 🍁 Tours
- 🍁 Information booths at the Zoo, the WAP, and the Westin Hotel
- 🍁 Equipment assistance
- 🍁 Activity planning
- 🍁 Hospitality suite organizers
- 🍁 Greeters
- 🍁 And more!

This by NO means is a completed list. If there is something you would be interested in doing and you don't see it above, just let me know and it is yours! We want to make sure you are having fun while you are volunteering.

This is going to be a wonderful opportunity to meet folks from all over the country. To see, in person, that voice you only heard over the phone, or typing you have only seen in emails. It's a chance to network, learn, and exchange ideas with other professionals. There is just nothing like it.

So please, do not let this rare opportunity pass you by. VOLUNTEER!

Please email me, Laurie L. Brogan, Volunteer Coordinator, SD AAZK, at birdladysdaazk@cox.net or call 619-584-9408.

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CALENDAR 2010 LOCAL EVENTS

August 19, 2010. Pat & Oscar's Fundraiser. Location: 5 different locations throughout San Diego. Time: noon – 9:00 pm. Great fun for a great cause! Go to www.sdaazk.com for more information and the special coupon needed.

August 26, 2010: SD AAZK Annual Dunk Tank. Location: Zoo's Camp Timbuktu. Time: 11 a.m. until 3:00 pm. Join us for a splashing good time. We dunk supervisors for a great cause!

September 7, 2010: Project Wildlife: Raptor Rehabilitation in San Diego. Location: SD Zoo's Rondavel. Time: 2:30 social, 3:00 presentation.

September 15, 2010: Rubio's Fundraiser. Location: 2 locations: Mission Valley and Escondido. Time: 2:00 p.m. until closing. Visit www.sdaazk.com for more info and special coupons.

September 27, 2010: Mimi's Cafe Fundraiser. Location: Mission Valley. Time: 2:00 p.m. until closing. Visit www.sdaazk.com for more info and special coupons.

October 16, 2010: Exotic Escapades at Lions, Tigers, and Bears. Location: Alpine. Time: Special engagement. Visit www.sdaazk.com for more info.

October 30, 2010: SD AAZK Photo Contest Deadline. Finalist announced on November 15. Visit www.sdaazk.com for details.

NATIONAL EVENTS

August 22–26, 2010 National AAZK Conference—hosted by the Philadelphia chapter of AAZK. Info at www.philadelphiaaazk.org.

August 24–28, 2011 National AAZK Conference—San Diego, CA, hosted by SD AAZK at the Westin Gaslamp Hotel. Go to our website at www.sdaazk.com and click on "2011 Conference"