

The Pride



Fall issue

The Metrozoo Quarterly

1981

A Look Back... And A Look Ahead

The zoo has been open for a year. And what an eventful year it has been. The preview phase has given people a chance to see the zoo grow from a fledgling project into a high-flying attraction. The Preview Center has also given us a chance to get to know our visitors and to respond to their needs.

Take the orangutan viewing cave, for instance. It proved to be so popular that it was always packed with people, which became a bit of a problem sometimes. So, when we built the lion display, with its viewing area, we made the walk-in cave much larger, with a separate entrance and exit. And we made the glass window a lot bigger.

Upon reflection, it has been a

very good year indeed. The Crandon Park Zoo was closed to the public amid a chorus of fond farewells from a community that had grown to love it. Now, the *new* zoo is becoming a part of that community. In the year since it has been open, the Metrozoo Preview Center has attracted almost 300,000 visitors, a grand total when you consider that we are open only on weekends.

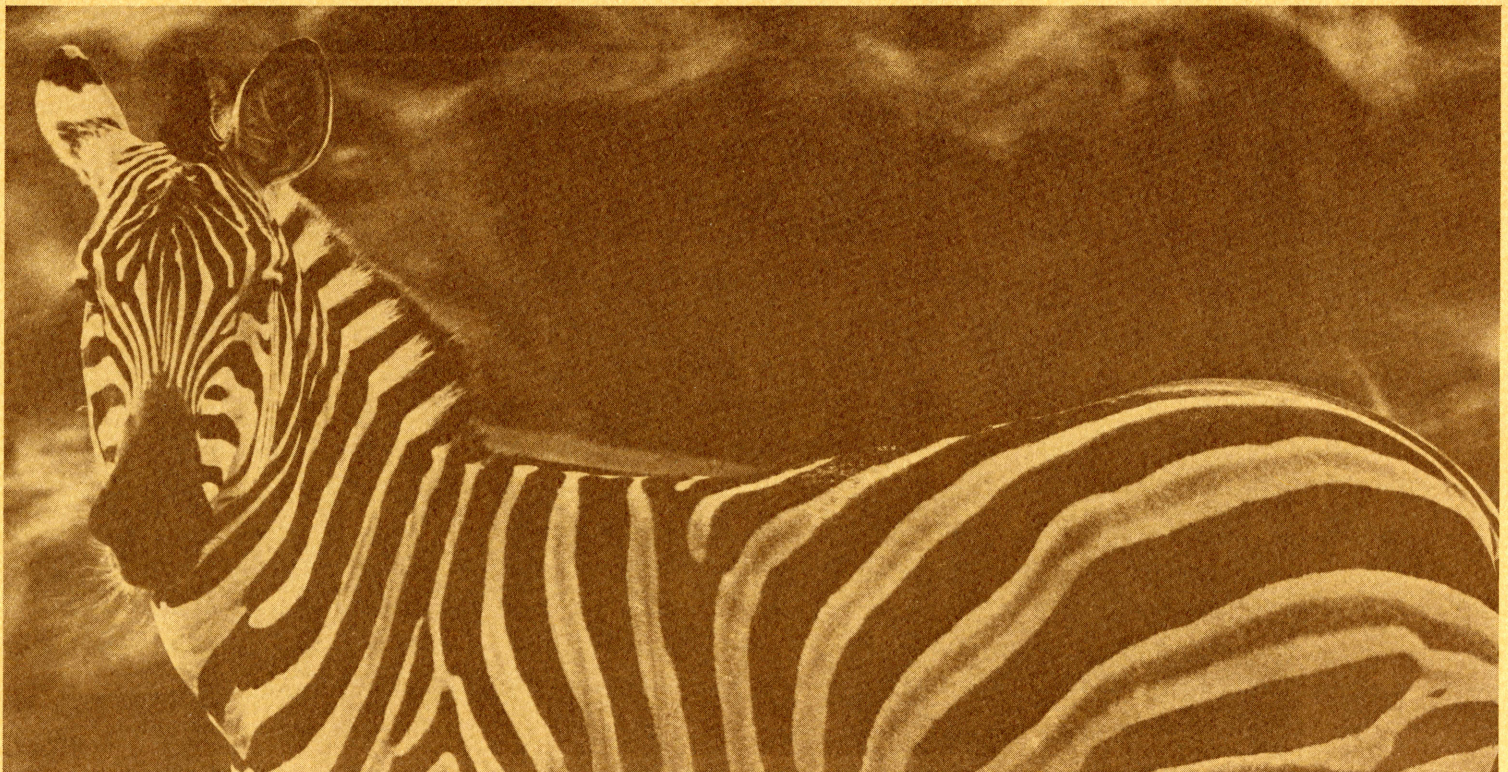
Although the Preview Center is a scene of peace and tranquillity, there is frantic activity behind the scenes in preparation for the grand opening on December 12th. With the opening just a few months away, the excitement is mounting,

and the activity accelerating.

The monorail, after long and winding negotiations, is back on track. The lakefront restaurant being built by Sportservice, the zoo concessionaire, is looming on the horizon. The jagged rooftops on the Asian Contact Village are nearly complete and will look spectacular when bright designs are stencilled on. Most of the animal paddocks are almost ready, with the completed rockwork, lush grass and colorful flowers. Soon, it will be time to move in the rest of the animals from Crandon.

Before we know it, the grand opening festivities will be in full swing. And then...but that's another story.

—photo by Bill Frakes



He's Esra Special

A curly-haired individual with a big black bag is a familiar sight around the zoo these days. That's Dr. Gerald Esra, who has joined Dr. Gordon Hubbell as staff veterinarian. He seems to be always hurrying around, attending to animals.

But he took time out to tell us a little bit about himself. Before coming here, Jerry was a veterinarian with the Los Angeles Zoo for six years. He earlier had an internship in veterinary medicine at the San Diego Zoo, after graduating from the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of California, Davis.

His interests include scuba diving and lobster chasing. He's certainly in the right place for that. Jerry moved to Miami with his wife, Susan, and their two children — Philip, who is 8, and Victoria, who is 4. They love the clear skies with the impressive sunsets in Miami and Jerry says, "The fresh air is new for us after Los Angeles."

Well, Jerry's certainly a breath of fresh air for all of us, and we hope the Esras will be with us for a long, long time.

Animal Crackers

Metrozoo's crack softball team, appropriately enough called "The Animals," made its debut this year. "The Animals" played some wild games and won three out of ten. Oh, well, there's always next year. Try to be there to cheer them on. They need all the help they can get — it's a zoo out there as well.

Artfelt Congratulations

The Metrozoo Design Team, affectionately nicknamed ZDT, won two Honorable Mentions for design in a competition arranged by the National Association of Counties. And this while the zoo is still in its preview phase! We always knew they were winners and are very proud that the outside world also recognizes their talent.

Their talent has gone into various facets of zoo design, and their rocks, trees and signs are on display all around the park. For those who would like to see the personal artwork of ZDT members, an exhibition is being held at the West Dade Regional Library this winter.



Hats off to you...that's what Jasper, our irrepressible orangutan, seems to be saying to his keeper, Kurt Mannchen.

—photo by Bill Frakes

Here Comes The Pride

Kurt has no problems communicating with his orangutan, as you can see from the picture on the top of the page. And he's proud of it.

That's exactly what *The Pride* is all about: communicating with each other. As the first issue of *The Pride* goes out to all of you, we hope that you'll let us know your news and views.

Just drop us a line and tell us what you'd like to read about in this newsletter. Or just stop by *The Pride* office to let us know what's

new. After all, this is your newsletter — of you, for you, and by you.

The name itself reflects that — we are all members of the pride of people working at the zoo, and we take a great deal of pride in what we do. So don't just leave *The Pride* lion around... become a part of it.

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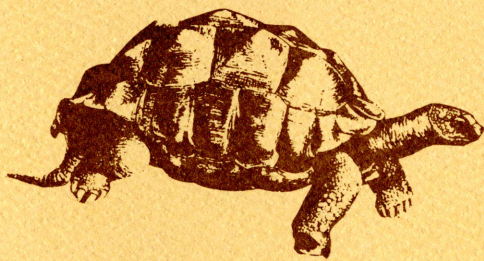
Shell Mates

On the day that Prince Charles and Lady Diana exchanged wedding vows in London, we were waiting for a romantic union of a very different kind at Metrozoo. Five Galapagos tortoises were flying in from Hawaii. Well, not literally. They arrived on a Pan Am flight in crates and were escorted down to the zoo by Bill Zeigler and Ron Magill.

A royal reception awaited them here. Several of us were lined up along the Galapagos tortoise paddock, including various members of the media with their cameras ready to record the arrival. We were a little anxious because it was drizzling steadily—sunny Florida was not living up to its name.

We were told not to worry, however, the rain was actually "a stimulus to mating for these tortoises." We would find out shortly how true that was.

A forklift unloaded the five crates on the paddock. Zeigler pried them open, and five tortoises peered out at their new home. One male, bolder than the rest, started to walk out. Halfway through, his attention was caught by one of the local lovelies sauntering by. He immediately veered in her direction and started chasing her as fast as his feet would carry him.



Meanwhile, one of our resident heavyweights, Tank, decided it was time to check out the new arrivals. His eye alighted on a timid belle and Tank proceeded to welcome her in his own special way.

We were rather pleased with all this activity, since the five new tortoises are here on breeding loan. They belong to the Bronx Zoo and to the National Zoo, and were sent here because the weather and the display at Metrozoo combined to make it a promising honeymoon spot for this endangered species.

We all hope that this breeding loan will pay large dividends. One thing, at least, is certain: on the part of the principals, there's no lack of interest.



She came...

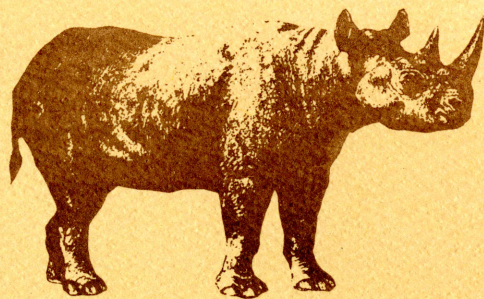


She saw...



She conquered...

—photos by Jerry D. Friedman



Rhinotebook

*The rhino is a homely beast,
For human eyes he's not a feast.
Farewell, farewell, you old rhinoceros,
I'll stare at something less prepoceros.*

—Ogden Nash

Did you know that the largest mammal ever to roam the earth was a rhino? It stood 18 feet high and was about 39 feet long. Its name: the Baluchitherium.

Did you know that one of the most aggressive animals in existence today is a rhino? The black rhino in particular. It's reputed to attack its own shadow, not to mention an unsuspecting zookeeper or a shiny red wheelbarrow.

Did you know that the largest land mammal, next to the elephant, is the white rhino? In Africa, where they were once numerous, their population is steadily dwindling, and there are now fewer than 4,000 left.

Did you know that Sumatra is the home of the smallest rhino? And it's not all that small, either. There may be pygmy hippos, but there's no such animal as a pygmy rhino.

Did you know that a rhino horn contains no bones at all? Its horn is actually made up of hair-like fiber, closely packed to produce a stiff appendage.

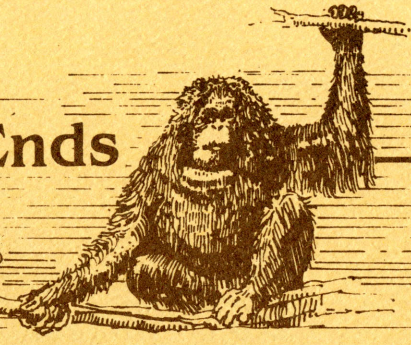
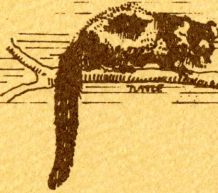
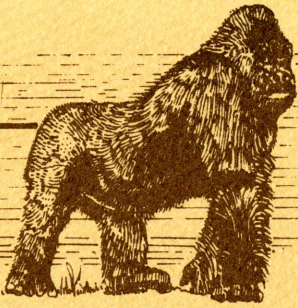
If you know all this about the rhino, then you must also be aware that it is highly endangered. It seems impressively equipped for survival with its great bulk, its surprising nimbleness, its armor-like skin and its formidable horn. Yet, for all its apparent indestructibility, the rhino is in serious trouble.

An international conservation treaty currently lists all rhinos as endangered species. However, the rhino is still killed for the medicinal value attributed to parts of the beast. Its horn, especially, is a fabled and costly aphrodisiac, selling for well over \$500 per ounce.

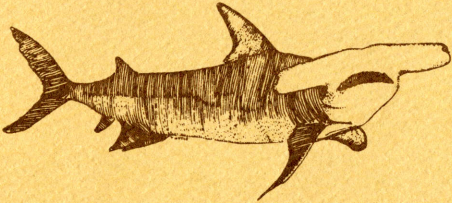
The plight of the rhino underlines the concern we all share: extinction is irreversible, but a zoo such as ours can help to arrest the process.

—Frank Rivera

Odds & Ends



Doc Hubbell is back after three and a half weeks in Australia, raving about the "fantastic and friendly people" down under. He did some research there for a book he's planning on sharks. His wife and he drove from Perth to Sidney, covering 4,380 miles and visiting three zoos in the process. The drive from Crandon to Metrozoo will feel like a breeze after that. Incidentally, watch for the August issue of *National Geographic*. Doc's featured in it. He certainly gets around.



A warm welcome to Debbie Reclio and Scott Fuller, who've just joined the zookeeping staff. Debbie has worked in a veterinary clinic, and is a swing keeper at Metrozoo. She also assists the vet when she gets a chance. Scott has worked with the Dickerson Park Zoo, Jungle Larry's African Safari and the Big Cypress

Nature Preserve. He's currently a keeper in the quarantine area.

* * *

Amy Reilly, Juan Escobar, Richard "Army" McGuire, and Mamta Chaudhry-Fryer are leaving the zoo to move on to other things. We wish them all the best and will miss them.

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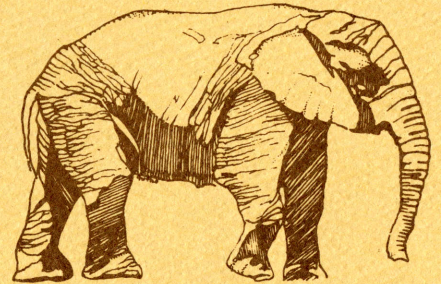
The local chapter of the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) is planning to raise funds by holding a dog-wash on Labor Day. Let your dog make a splash and help out a good cause.

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Our good friends at the Zoological Society are preparing the final form of the proposal for the \$1.6 million animal hospital, which will be one big step along the road to becoming a world-class zoo.

* * *

Jean Hromadka has been transferred to Crandon from Metrozoo to assist Bill Doss in working with the elephants. Jean is delighted because she has always wanted to work with elephants.



So you think animal shows are for the birds? Well, you're right. In December, we will have Ray Berwick on board, with an educational and entertaining show starring birds. He currently produces the world-famous "Birds of Prey" show at the San Diego Zoo, as well as shows for Sea World in San Diego, and Universal Studios. His credits include all the animal effects for Hitchcock's *The Birds*, *Birdman of Alcatraz* and *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. His latest protege is NBC's Boomer. Hoo-Ray for Berwick!

