

TOUCAN TALK

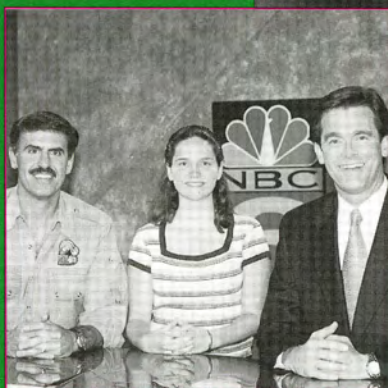
DISCOVER YOUR ZOO!



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THE MEERKATS ARE HERE!

**Family Weekend Celebration:
The Meerkat Encounter
and African Festival
Saturday, July 1 and Sunday, July 2**

PAGE 2



Cover: Meerkat
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The Meerkats Are Here!

Story by Ron Magill

Family Weekend Celebration: The Meerkat Encounter and African Festival Saturday, July 1 and Sunday, July 2

The meerkat has become increasingly popular among the young and young at heart, thanks to the tremendous success of the Disney classic, "The Lion King" and the subsequent cartoon series, "Timon & Pumba" where Timon plays a loveable meerkat constantly in some kind of mischief. In real life, these wonderful members of the mongoose family are also very entertaining to watch and are among visitor favorites at zoos lucky enough to display them. Now, after working closely with wildlife authorities to acquire the proper permits, Metrozoo has its very own Meerkat Exhibit at the Children's Zoo.

Seven spunky meerkats, all under one year old, are anxious to tickle your funny bone. They have small heads, long bodies and tails, and are as cute as can be. Their coats are grizzled gray and tan with dark transverse bands across their backs and buff colored bellies. Their ears and tail tips are black, and so is the ring around their eyes, making them look like they're wearing sunglasses.

The meerkat is an extremely social animal living in colonies usually containing about 12 animals, with some numbering as many as 30. The name "meerkat" is actually an Afrikaans word meaning "lake cat." This is somewhat misleading since the meerkat's habitat is generally semi-arid scrub, plains, and open sandy areas including the Kalahari Desert in Southern Africa. However, the meerkat is very fond of bathing when water is available, and this is most likely where the name originated.

Meerkats are diurnal and spend the night in their network of burrows that they dig with powerful forelegs and long claws. These burrows can be as deep as ten feet and are sometimes shared with other animals such as ground squirrels and yellow mongoose.

Continued on page 3



Photo: Ron Magill

NEW ANIMAL BABIES

Births

- 1 Male Angolan colobus (March 7)
- 1 Female addax (March 11)
- 1 Red-crested pochard (April 2)
- 5 Ruddy ducks (April 6)
- 2 Abdim's storks (April 28)
- 3 European white storks (April 27)

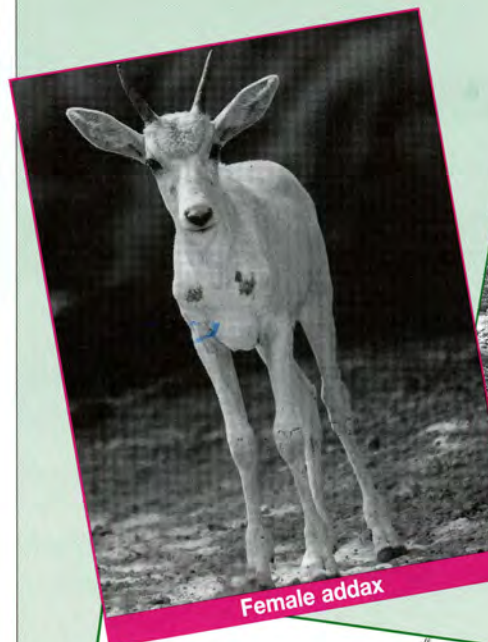
Acquisitions

- 1 Male and 1 female Malayan tapir (April 11)
- 1 Military macaw (April 29)
- 3 Mata matas (March 1)
- 4 Male and 3 female meerkats (March 9)

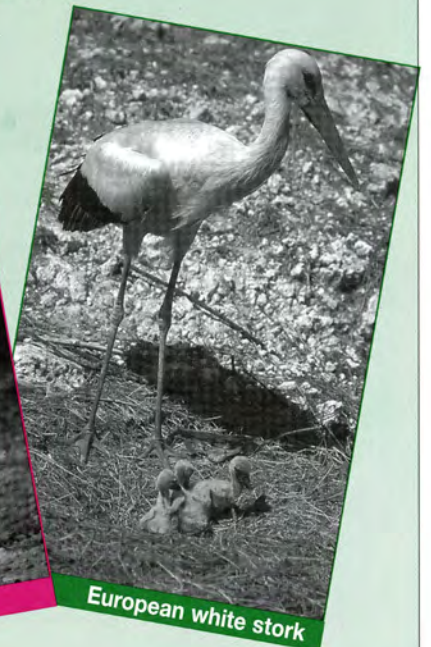
Photos: Ron Magill



Meerkats have grizzled coats with dark transverse bands across their backs



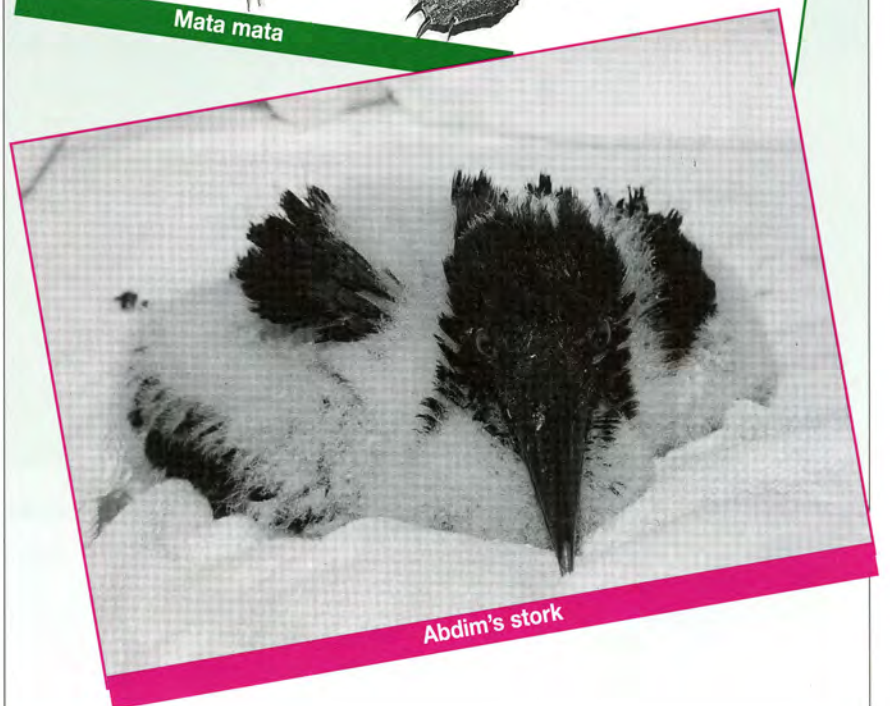
Female addax



European white stork



Mata mata



Abdim's stork

Continued from page 2

The meerkat prefers open ground where it can better spot predators by a system known as "sentry-duty." Sentry-duty involves one or more members of the colony standing upright on a mound or other elevated area and scanning the surroundings for predators while the others forage for food. Special attention is given to the sky because meerkats are a favorite food of several birds of prey. If a predator is spotted, the sentry will emit a loud warning "bark" which will cause the other members of the colony to rapidly scurry into the safety of their burrows.

The meerkat diet consists mainly of invertebrates such as insects, spiders and scorpions. When available, they will also feed on lizards, ground-nesting birds, eggs, small rodents, and on occasion, venomous snakes. Meerkats depend on a very keen sense of smell to locate their prey in the ground, and they'll dig vigorously to catch it.

As with all aspects of their lives, meerkats depend on teamwork and cooperation when breeding and raising offspring. Though usually a dominant pair forms the core breeding partnership, in large groups, several other females may also become

pregnant by the same male. After a gestation period of approximately 11 weeks, up to four blind and naked babies are born deep in a burrow. After they are weaned at about two months, they are left with a "babysitter" while their mother goes out hunting.

Our meerkats are captive born and come from the Hogle Zoo in Utah.

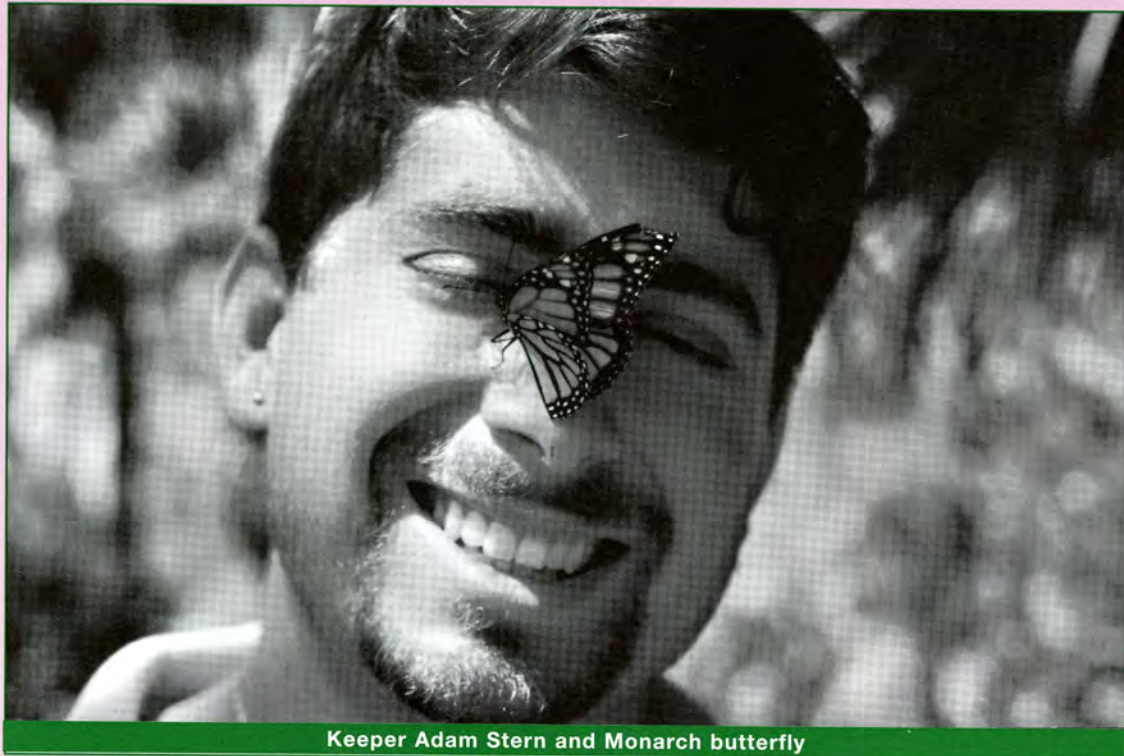
Don't miss the African Festival and Meerkat Encounter on Saturday, July 1 and Sunday, July 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Photos: Dolara Batchelor

Enjoy a Fantasy of Flight In the Butterfly Garden

By Kristin Jimenez, Children's Zoo Manager



Keeper Adam Stern and Monarch butterfly

Photo: Bob Beck

Tucked into a corner of the Children's Zoo are some animals often overlooked by the average Zoo visitor. Each day people pass them, unaware of the amazing activity going on only inches away! They don't see the young perfectly camouflaged in the bushes, or the adults in search of a good meal. Most don't even notice the zebra laying her eggs. . .

Zebra longwing, that is! On any sunny morning in our butterfly garden, you can watch several zebra longwing butterflies laying their eggs on the tips of *Passiflora suberosa*, our native passion flower vine. Their white and black caterpillars munch on the leaves further down the stem. In a few weeks, these caterpillars will crawl away from the plant they have lived on since hatching in search of the perfect place to pupate. Here, they will hang upside down, shed their skin, form a chrysalis and begin their metamorphosis. They'll be ready to start the whole cycle again when they emerge as adults.

Many other butterflies call our garden home, too. Monarchs, gulf fritillaries, sulphurs, skippers and swallowtails are all common residents. The striking green and black malachite has even been seen on occasion, flitting from flower to flower, sipping the sweet nectar inside with its straw-like mouth,

called a proboscis. Flowers, especially in shades of red, yellow and violet, attract the adults to the garden by offering them the nutrition they need. Minerals can also be lapped up from a rock, dampened by a slowly dripping water bucket.

The life cycle is kept going by the carefully selected "larval plants," so called because they are eaten by the butterfly larvae, or caterpillars. But caterpillars are picky. For each species of butterfly, its caterpillars will only eat one type of plant! The female butterfly will lay her eggs only on that plant to ensure her babies plenty of the right food when they hatch.

South Florida is a unique place to garden for butterflies and other wildlife. For many tropical species, this is the northernmost part of their range. Likewise, for many Northern species, this is as far South as they come. This convergence creates the amazing variety we have in our butterfly garden every day, and that you can see at your home. Use the following list of larval plants, and the species that eat them, to help you start to choose plants for your own garden. And next time you visit the Zoo, ask the Children's zookeepers to point out some of the most wonderful animals you may *never* have noticed.

Plant	Butterfly
Cassias and sennas:	Various sulphurs
Citrus (grapefruit, orange, lemon, wild lime):	Giant swallowtail
Coontie (and other cycads):	Atala hairsteak
Corky stem passionvine:	Zebra longwing, gulf fritillary, julia
Dill, parsley and carrots:	Eastern black swallowtail
Dutchman's pipe:	Gold rim swallowtail
Green shrimp plant:	Malachite
Milkweed:	Monarch, queen

The Ruddy Duck

Ruddy ducks are small diving ducks native to North America, with subspecies in South America. Their overall coloration is rusty brown, but males sport white cheeks during breeding season and an amazing bright blue bill year round. This species is somewhat difficult to raise in captivity; however, Metrozoo was able to raise 5 ruddy ducklings this year. Look for them on the front lake by the Toucan Trader gift shop.



Photo: Dolora Batchelor

SKETCHING PEGGY

Our African elephants are very popular, as you well know from all the interesting questions that appear in our Ask Peggy column. This issue we decided to feature Peggy through the eyes of one of the members of the Zoological Society of Florida. **Jesus Chambrot** works for the U.S. Postal Service at night; but on his time off, he comes to the Zoo and sketches the African elephants. He says he will continue to sketch them until he has mastered one perfect sketch. Jesus also enjoys sitting back and watching the elephants interact with each other. It's just one more reason why members return again and again to the Zoo!



ZSF Member Jesus Chambrot sketching African Elephant

Photo: Sherrie Avery

Cruising for Scholastic Success: The Carnival Kids Program and the ZSF

By Anthea Lavallee

One of South Florida's largest employers, Carnival Cruise Lines believes in giving back to the community and dedicates significant resources toward improving the quality of elementary education among schools in low-income neighborhoods. Over the past three years, the Carnival Foundation, along with the Zoological Society of Florida (ZSF) have built a partnership based on a shared commitment to education. Carnival Foundation sponsors a Zoo outreach program designed to complement the fourth-grade biology curriculum at Miami Park, Liberty City, and Carol City elementary schools. The program brings textbook biology to life through the use of animals and biofacts.

As members of the ZSF Education Department, Ricardo Stanoss and I are

responsible for the program. In my first year, I was prepared to work hard in order to make the program a success for the kids; I was not prepared, however, for the profound impact that the program would have on me. Since we worked together with the same set of students for the entire school year, the Carnival Cruise Lines Kids Program became an important part of a regular schedule of classroom activities.

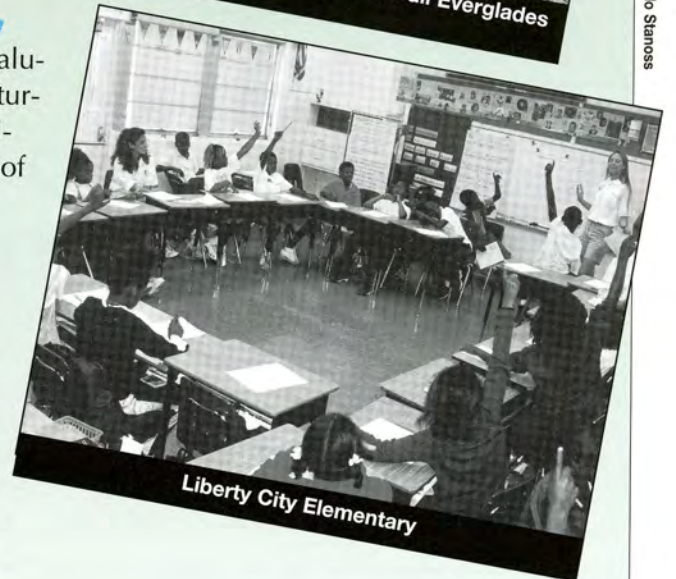
While our relationship with the students grew, I became aware of a change in the children's attitude toward conservation, coupled with a growing respect for nature. In turn, I began to develop an interest in the students as individuals and, as an instructor, a deep sense of pride in their academic achievements. Fieldtrips to the Zoo and to the Everglades were rare and unforgettable adventures. As

old fears were conquered and animal myths exposed, the Carnival Cruise Lines Kids were quickly becoming naturalists! Although we have developed quantitative measures of the program's impact, I felt that the students' growing enthusiasm was the true testament of our success.

Nature has always been an important part of my life. As a ZSF employee, my biggest responsibility and most valuable contribution are nurturing an interest in the environment among students of all ages. As yet another successful school year draws to a close, I am grateful to Carnival Foundation for enabling me to carry out my life's work! Ricardo and I look forward to continuing with this wonderful project for many years to come.



Carol City Elementary at Gumbolimbo Trail Everglades



Liberty City Elementary

Photos: Ricardo Stanoss

Elisabeth Koncza Promoted to Deputy Director



Koncza received her Master of Science degree in Biology from Florida International University.

Elisabeth M. Koncza was promoted to the position of Deputy Director of the Zoological Society of Florida. Koncza has worked in the Education Department since 1996, most recently as Education Director, and will continue to serve in that role as well. She assumes responsibility for the Zoological Society in the absence of the Executive Director and will be overseeing marketing, retail, facilities management,

Anthea Lavallee Promoted to Director of Educational Programming



Lavallee worked in Costa Rica and Nicaragua as a student, an instructor, and a research scientist. As a field biologist, her focus was on the behavior and ecology of tropical rainforest primates.

Anthea Lavallee was promoted from Education Specialist to Director of Educational Programming. She will be supervising existing education programs, including outreach and magnet schools, establishing new programs, participating on a team devoted to exhibit design, and developing Zoo education literature. Lavallee has been with the Zoological Society of Florida since August 1999, and has a Master of Arts degree in Biological Anthropology (Primate behavior and ecology) from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

ANIMAL MINDS AT WORK - SESSION A

How do different animals deal with daily challenges? How do they learn? Can humans learn from "other" animals? Can they learn from us? In the first session of Summer Camp we are going to explore the answers to these and other exciting questions.

SENSATIONAL ANIMALS - SESSION B

Animals have different skills and strengths that allow them to have a unique place in nature. In the second session of Summer Camp we are going to investigate how animals use their senses to their best advantage.

Ages 4-6

KINDERCAMP- SESSION A

Dates: June 26 - 30
July 10 - 14
July 24 - 28
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

KINDERCAMP- SESSION B

Dates: July 3 - 7
July 17 - 21
July 31 - August 4
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost: Member: \$125 per week
Non-member: \$145 per week

Ages 7- 10

ZOOFARI CAMP SESSION A

Dates: June 19 - 23
July 3 - 7
July 17 - 21
July 31 - August 4
August 14 - 18
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Early morning drop-off 8:30 a.m. additional \$10.00 per week per child • After camp care 3:30-5:30 p.m. additional \$25.00 per week per child

ZOOFARI CAMP SESSION B

Dates: June 26 - 30
July 10 - 14
July 24 - 28
August 7 - 11
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost: Member: \$125 per week
Non-member: \$145 per week

Ages 11 - 13

ZOOLIFE CAMP SESSION A

Dates: August 7 - 11
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

ZOOLIFE CAMP SESSION B

Dates: August 14 - 18
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost: Member: \$125 per week
Non-member: \$145 per week

Ages 14 - 17

TEEN ZOOLOGIST

Hey teens!

If you are 14 to 17 years old and the animal kingdom seems irresistible to you, it may be time to become a Teen Zoologist! The first week of summer camp is dedicated to the training of teen volunteers, who assist with different areas of the zoo, such as the Children's Zoo, the Zoo Camps, and public events. Upon completing this training program, teens are eligible to join the Zoo Volunteer Team. Teens must apply and will be interviewed and evaluated. Each volunteer is required to assist with one week of Summer Zoofari Camp. Join us for a thrilling experience!

Dates: June 19 - 23
Times: 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost: Member: \$125 • Non-members: \$145

- \$10.00 discount with 2 or more weeks registration or;
 - \$10.00 discount with 2 or more siblings.
- Please, only one discount per family. Please provide your child with lunch.
All Summer Zoofari Camp programs are subject to a \$30 cancellation fee.

REGISTRATION FORM

Parent/Guardian Name _____
 Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Daytime Phone # _____ Evening Phone # _____
 Membership # _____ Non-Member _____
 Payment enclosed: Check # _____ MasterCard _____ VISA _____ AMEX _____ Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____
 Signature of Cardholder _____ Camp Fee(s) Total _____

CAMPER INFORMATION

Name of Camper _____ Date of Birth: _____
 Camp Program _____ Date _____
 Camp Session(s) _____ Date _____
 Camp Session(s) _____ Date _____

CAMPER'S MEDICAL INFORMATION

Physician Name _____ Phone _____
 Dentist Name _____ Phone _____

In an emergency, if the parent, guardian or designated physician/dentist cannot be reached, I authorize the Zoological Society of Florida to transport and/or obtain medical services from any physician/dentist for my child.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Please indicate any medical conditions or health problems of which the Camp staff should be aware. Please describe: (if you require further space, please use a separate sheet of paper.)

Allergies _____ Handicap _____
 Prescribed Medications _____ Other _____

(Your signature below gives permission to Camp staff to dispense only prescribed medications you send with your child. Please provide the prescribed container, paraphernalia necessary for taking medications, and explicit instructions on a separate sheet of paper.)

NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL PICK UP THE CHILD

Name _____ Relationship _____
 Phone # _____ Vehicle information: Make _____
 Color _____ Tag # _____

I give permission for my child to participate in the Zoological Society of Florida's Summer Camp program. I have read the registration and medical sections and have supplied accurate information. My child can be photographed and his/her picture used for public relations purposes.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ **Date** _____

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. Registration cannot be processed unless this form is completely filled out.

For reservations please mail registration form to Zoological Society of Florida/Education Department - 12400 S.W. 152nd Street, Miami, FL 33177-1499.

Africa Through the Eyes of Our Youth

By Ron Magill

Thanks to the partnership of WTVJ-NBC/6, *The Miami Herald*, Conservation Corporation Africa, South African Airways, and a generous gift from an anonymous donor, a South Florida middle school child has the special opportunity to make the trip of a lifetime. Middle school students (grades 6-8) were invited to participate in an essay contest entitled "Why I Dream of Going to Africa."



Ron Magill, Metrozoo; Ruth Carson, 8th-grader at Miami Springs Middle School; Michael Williams, NBC/6

"Africa Through the Eyes of Our Youth." This documentary will be heavily promoted on NBC/6 and broadcast to all of South Florida.

Schools from Miami-Dade and Broward counties picked one winner from each school and forwarded the winning essays to a panel of judges from the sponsoring organizations and Miami Metrozoo. Twenty semi-finalists won a family membership to the Zoological Society of Florida. Five finalists gave their essays orally before the panel of judges and were interviewed individually. All finalists will receive a special gift from Sony Corporation.

Ruth Carson is the grand prizewinner of an all-expenses-paid safari to Africa with me and a parent or guardian of her choice! In addition, NBC/6 is sending news anchor Michael Williams and award-winning photographer Jeff Guerra to accompany us throughout the trip. NBC/6 will produce a 30-minute documentary with the working title

In Loving Memory



A dear friend and volunteer at Miami Metrozoo, Andy Erbel, passed away on April 9, 2000. Andy, a retired airline executive, became a volunteer at Miami Metrozoo not long after Hurricane Andrew. Along with his wife, Dottie, he completed the intensive docent-training course in the fall of 1993 and worked steadily in various areas of the Zoo. Andy could be found in front of an animal exhibit, teaching our visitors about the animals on display, or in the Children's Zoo petting yard, interacting with the Zoo's littlest visitors. And many will remember Andy in his Halloween costumes, handing out treats during Metroboo! But most will remember his warm smile and his affable charm.

Andy's family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the Redlands Community Church or the Zoological Society of Florida.

Our Sincere Thanks

Our grateful thanks go to Lynn Cambest, outgoing Treasurer of the Zoological Society of Florida, and SunTrust Bank for a contribution for the Zoological Society of Florida's education and children's programs.

Thank you, Miami Jai-Alai and ZSF President-Elect Dan Licciardi for a donation to support the work of the Zoological Society of Florida.

We appreciate Dade Community Foundation's grant to develop the pine rocklands conservation education project at Miami Metrozoo.

The Great Metrozoo Egg Safari was a terrific success, thanks to our wonderful sponsors, COAST 97.3 FM Radio, and Eckerd Corporation. We also wish to thank Winn-Dixie and Elise Silver, feature artist of Hugo Reiner Productions for contributing to this event.

Metrozoo was honored to be the site for filming introductions to upcoming episodes of the popular Animal Planet show, *Animal Encounters* with Jim Fowler. We are grateful to Jim Fowler for donating his time to spending the evening with members and visitors on May 6.

Thank you, First National Bank of South Miami for the opportunity to showcase the Zoological Society of Florida and Miami Metrozoo at the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce Trustee reception held at the Bank on May 9, 2000

Many thanks to ZSF Board member Carole Cotton and Happy Balloons for sponsoring Boogie For The Animals on June 3. The fundraising dance with a silent auction was a great success, raising \$10,700 that will enable Metrozoo to build enrichment puzzle-feeders for some of the animals. We'll let you know when the animals get the feeders.

An Evening With Jim Fowler

Approximately 800 guests were thrilled to see Jim Fowler in person at Miami Metrozoo on Saturday, May 6. The crowd was entertained as Fowler told anecdotes about some of his most memorable animal encounters.

Fowler was in Miami filming introductions to upcoming episodes of the popular Animal Planet show, *Animal Encounters*. Metrozoo was Fowler's choice as the best possible venue for the filming. One reason for choosing Metrozoo was that it is the only Zoo in the U.S. to have a handlable king cheetah; and working with a king cheetah has always been one of Fowler's dreams.

Fowler cited Metrozoo's educational outreach programs as another reason why he wanted to do the filming in Miami. "Metrozoo has one of the most impressive and successful animal ambassador programs I've encountered anywhere," stated Fowler. "This Zoo is an excellent role model for other zoos around the country."

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GIFT SHOP BACK-TO-SCHOOL SPECIAL



***20%
Discount
off all
purchases**

**Hey Parents!
Get your kid's school supplies at Metrozoo for the new school year**

*Excluding clearance items and any other discounts. Coupon good for one-time purchase. Expires August 31, 2000

2nd Annual Cool Zoo Summer

June 24 – August 31, 2000



Photo: Sherrie Avery

For summer outdoor fun, the Zoo's the coolest place in town! Just look at all the ways you can keep cool while you enjoy the Zoo. Over 7,000 trees have been planted since Hurricane Andrew, with trees shading exhibit benches. We've added more chickee umbrellas in front of exhibits

and misters to cool you down along the paths. The free air-conditioned monorail ride is great for a bird's eye view of the Zoo and getting a cool break from walking. Be sure to drink plenty of liquids, which you can buy from the vendors selling cold drinks, snow cones & popsicles.

Zoo Book Contest: Kids ages 6-12, read six (6) story books about animals that you can find here at the Zoo (you can buy the books in our gift shop), write a one-page story on "If I were a (name an animal), I would (you fill in what you would do)," draw a picture of your animal, and submit your story and picture by August 31, 2000 to the Zoological Society of Florida at

12400 SW 152 Street, Miami, FL 33177-1499. The winners will have their stories printed into a booklet, and will receive a Metrozoo T-shirt and a photograph signed by Ron Magill featuring the animal in their stories.

Sunday Concerts: July 9 – August 27, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Lakeside Grille Restaurant. Each Sunday we'll feature a popular music group with all your favorites: jazz, pop, rock, salsa, reggae, country/western, classical, and Latin hits. Enjoy the music and cool off with a soft-serve ice cream for just \$1.

Cool Water Fun: NEW this year, another way to beat the heat. For the coolest fun outdoors, we are adding two Rain Rooms. The Rain Rooms are cooling tents equipped with misting systems, almost like stepping into a refreshing shower room. Kids will have a blast getting wet at the Zoo!

**Family Weekend Celebration:
The Meerkat Encounter
and African Festival**

Saturday, July 1 & Sunday, July 2
9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

We have a COOL way for you to start the holiday weekend. To introduce you to our new Meerkat Exhibit at the Children's Zoo, there will be an African dance company, African crafts, African puppets, African stilt-walkers, meerkat face painting, a giant sand sculpture exhibit, and Keeper talks about our newest animals, the meerkats.



Saturday & Sunday, July 15 & 16, 10:00 a.m. – 5 p.m. At the Gold Coast Railroad Museum (next to Metrozoo)

A taste of the Tropics: Cooking demonstrations, tropical fruit sampling, hands-on activities, educational information about landscaping, resource conservation, the use of tropical fruits and vegetables, and a showcase of the many crops provided by the local farming community. For more information, visit the website at: www.tropicalag.org. Adults: \$4 Children: \$2

A Night for Jamaica

Thursday, July 20, from 7:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Join us for a fund raising Behind-The-Scenes Tour of the Zoo, led by keepers Adam Stern and Susan Kong. Proceeds will benefit the Hope Zoo Project in Kingston, Jamaica that was initiated by the late Damien Kong. Damien headed the Education Department of the Zoological Society of Florida, and had plans to work with the Hope Zoo's iguana education projects. As a tribute to his love of animals and his active concern for wildlife preservation, Adam and Damien's wife, Susan continue to work with the Hope Zoo. For reservations call (305) 255-5551. \$30 per person, ages 10 and over.

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DISCOVER YOUR ZOO!



Zoological Society of Florida
12400 SW 152nd Street
Miami, Florida 33177-1499

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Photo: Dolores Batchelor