

Star Tribune
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TODAY'S QUOTE

"Extinct is forever."

Kurt Benirschke, San Diego Zoo

VARIETY

E

MONDAY

October 27, 2003

DR. RHINO



MONDAY PROFILE

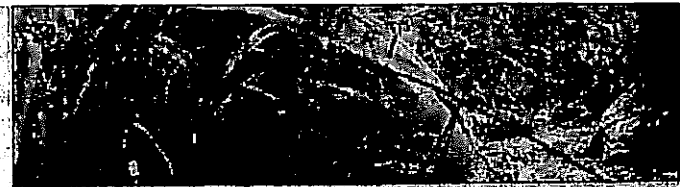
brother, Rolfe, an equine surgeon, saved Minah's life a few years back when they removed a misplaced implant from her bladder.

Then there's Earl at the Cincinnati Zoo, who in 2001 became the first Sumatran rhino to give birth in captivity in 112 years. (Andalas is the baby's name.)

And there's Ara and Torgamba, breeding males who will exchange places next year — Ara to Sumatra and Torgamba to Malaysia — in the hope of

In Radcliffe's case, those skills are considerable. As chief veterinarian at the Fossil Rim Wildlife Center near Dallas, Radcliffe has pioneered ways of treating rhinos without daggers and tranquilizers, which can be hazardous and stressful to the animals. Plus, as a specialist in administering ultrasound to determine pregnancy, he has overseen four black rhino births at Fossil Rim — a significant accomplishment. "Our captive population is self-sustaining."

RADCLIFFE continues on E10



Photos provided to the Star Tribune by Robyn and Rolfe Radcliffe. Dr. Robyn Radcliffe with Minah, a young Sumatran rhino who lives in a wildlife preserve in Malaysia. Radcliffe and his twin brother, Rolfe, saved Minah's life. Radcliffe drew the sketch of Minah, above, and has written and illustrated a book on rhinos for children.

The last rhinos:

There were rhinos all over Minnesota 5 million to 10 million years ago — they were the most common mammal in North America. Today, there are less than 20,000 in the world.



BLACK RHINO

3,100 surviving

Location: Africa

Weight: 1,700 to 3,000 pounds

Height: 4 1/2 to 5 1/2 feet at shoulder

Horns: Two. The front can measure from 2 to 4 feet; the rear averages 1 foot to 22 inches.

Did you know? Black rhinos aren't really black. They get that way from the dark soil in which they roil.

Source: International Rhino Foundation; <http://www.rhinos-rl.org>



WHITE RHINO

11,670 surviving

Location: Mainly southern Africa

Weight: 4,000 to 6,000 pounds

Height: 5 to 6 feet at shoulder

Horns: Two. Front measures 37 to 79 inches; the rear can grow to 22 inches.

Did you know? The white rhino breeds easily in captivity and is the least endangered of the five rhino species.



INDIAN RHINO

2,400 surviving

Location: Northern India, southern Nepal

Weight: 4,000 to 6,000 pounds

Height: 5 1/4 to 6 1/2 feet at shoulder

Horn: One, 8 to 24 inches

Did you know? Indian rhinos are the most amphibious of the five species. Their numbers dropped to a low of 200 before conservation efforts proved successful.



JAVAN RHINO

60 surviving

Location: Java, Vietnam

Weight: 2,000 to 5,000 pounds

Height: 5 to 5 1/4 feet at shoulder

Horn: One averaging 10 inches; the female's horn is smaller or nonexistent.

Did you know? There are no Javan rhinos in captivity. Despite their small numbers, the population has remained stable.



SUMATRAN RHINO

300 surviving

Location: Malaysia, Sumatra and Borneo

Weight: 1,300 to 2,000 pounds

Height: 3 to 5 feet at shoulder

Horns: Two. Front measures 10 to 31 inches; rear is generally under 3 inches.

Did you know? The only rhino with long, shaggy hair. The most endangered of all rhino species.

Networks divide families by demographics



Paul Drinkwater/NBC

With a few exceptions (such as NBC's "American Dreams," above), prime time no longer seems to be the ideal time for families to gather together and watch TV. Turn to E10.

Man bites dog? No, dog biscuits

By Michael Pollack
Herald-Tribune (Sarasota, Fla.)

Dogs aren't the only ones snapping up dog treats these days. People are eating them, too.

Gina Garcia's interest in dog biscuits evolved while she was working the late shift at Per Supply Center, a popular store in Sarasota, Fla.

She was bored and hungry, so she sampled a treat.

Seattle's Blue Dog Bakery cranks out millions of all-natural dog biscuits a year, and they have an avid human following.

The treats are made in a bakery that also produces cookies for human beings, and the ingredients — including blackstrap molasses and whole wheat flour — are approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for human consumption.

Blue Dog's human customers started nibbling on the peanut butter treats because they were satisfying the way a cookie is, but contained no refined sugar.

"We have thousands of people who eat our dog biscuits," said Margot Kenly, a Blue Dog spokeswoman.

Kathy Berk of Van Nuys, Calif., bought Blue Dog Peanut Butter & Molasses flavor treats for her three Labrador retrievers, but found herself irresistibly attracted by the aroma.

Berk, who also follows the Weight Watchers program, called Blue Dog's toll-free phone number to determine the fiber and fat content of the cookies, so she would know how to count them as part of her diet.

Berk said she eats the dog treats regularly, popping one into her own mouth when she is about to hand them out to her canine companions.

"They get really upset when they see me take one and they don't get one," she said.

INSIDE

Al Sichertman

Uncle Al recently spent some time with a pile of e-mail telling him how to get rid of a pile of e-mail. Turn to E2.

Breakfast Serial

To read Chapter 3 of "Winner's Circle," turn to E3.

Dear Abby E9

Movie listings E5

Comics E6-E7

Crosswords E9

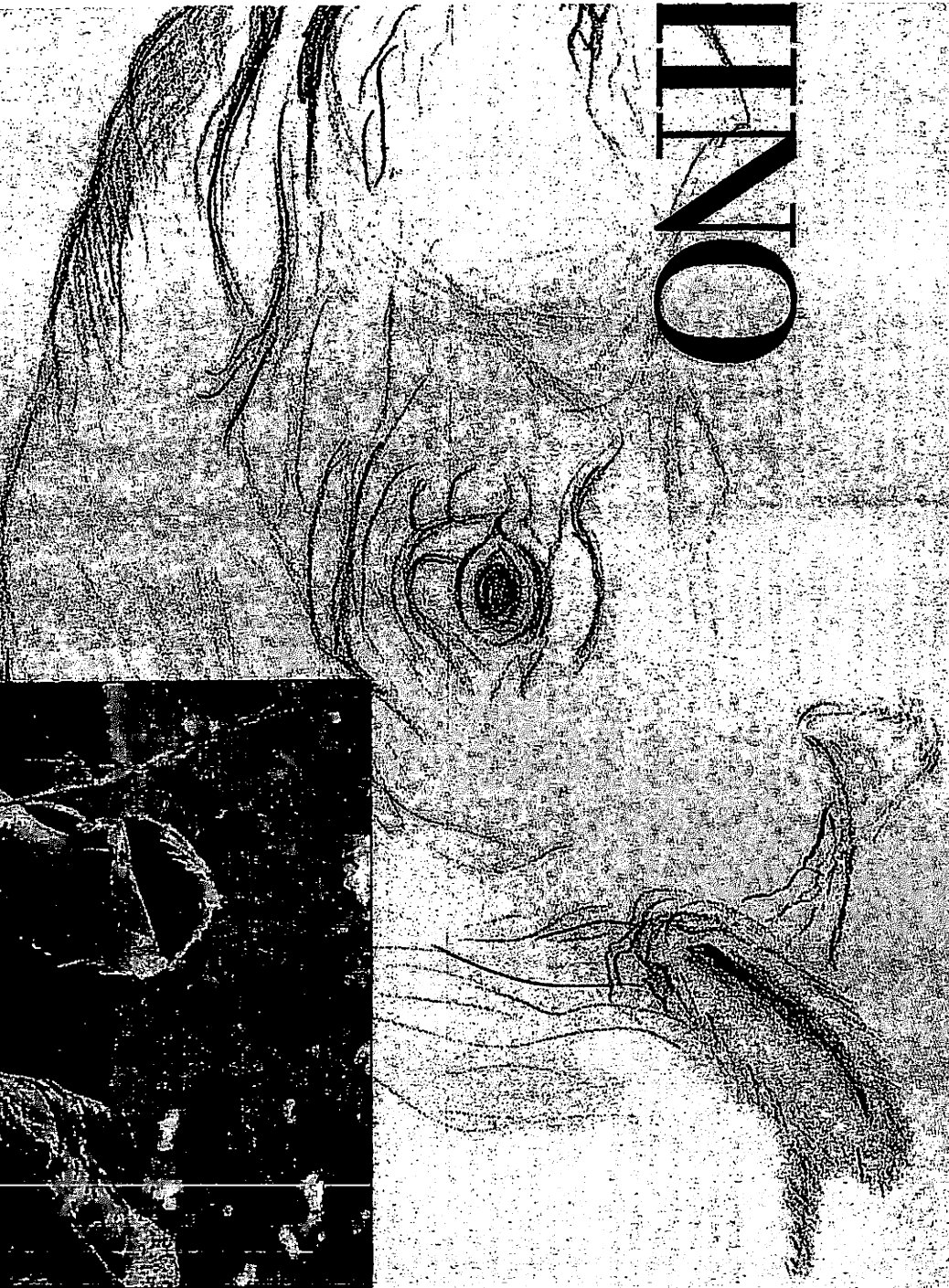
Television E2

Fixit E2

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VARIETY

MONDAY
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EINO

a sick rhinoceros, University of Minnesota
Dr. Robin Radcliffe is the man to call

on a first-name basis
as around the world.

opaining — there are
light on the planet. And
nursing
in a Malayan preserve
rhino foundation.
Radcliffe and his twin
brother, Holte, an
equine surgeon, saved
Minah's life a few years
ago. She's the only
rhinoceros to have been
rescued from

inmate at Zoo), who in
than three years, he built in
has: the baby rhinos)
rhino, breeding males
kyayer — Akafo Sima
sa — in the hope of

hooking up with some of the females and improve
ing a breeding pair that, together with partner
Umto, rhinos, will be in Omani (most of) have
made the Sumatran rhino's most endangered of the
rhinoceros, from species.

"Heal the sick, to be doing this," Radcliffe says, early
during a trip to the Twin Cities last month for a con-
ference about rhinos and wildlife, veterinarians. "What
you're working with a handful of Sumatrans, they
need all of the skills that a veterinarian can bring to
the table."

In Radcliffe's case, those skills are considerable.
As chief veterinarian at the FossilHorn Wildlife Center
near Dallas, Radcliffe has pioneered ways of treating
rhinos without dart guns and tranquilizers, which
can be hazardous and stressful for the animals. Plus,
as a specialist in administering ultrasound to deter-
mine pregnancy, he has overseen four black rhino
births at FossilHorn — a significant accomplishment.
"Our captive population is self-sustaining."

RADCLIFFE continues on E10



Photos (top) by Peter To the Sea; (middle) by Robin and Katie; (bottom) by the preserve in Malaysia. Radcliffe and his twin brother, Robo, saved Minah's life. Radcliffe drew the sketch of Minah above, and his wife and I illustrated a book on rhinos for children.

COVER STORIES

RADCLIFFE from E1

Rhinos are intelligent, often mischaracterized

As a result, Radcliffe is in great demand in rhino conservation circles. He and his brother travel to Africa and Malaysia several times each year to check on captive Sumatran rhinos at a facility supported by the International Rhino Foundation, as well as larger herds of other species in South African preserves.

His passion for conservation education led him to write and illustrate a children's book about a hornless rhinoceros.

"I think educating children about conservation is the key to their preservation," he said.

Rhino misconceptions

One might expect a rhino vet to be big and burly by necessity. Robin Radcliffe is neither. His delicate, long-fingered hands could belong to a pianist and he speaks so softly that one has to strain to hear him at times.

Rhinos are mischaracterized as well. They're often portrayed as short-tempered, nearsighted beasts who will charge at the least provocation. Radcliffe says nothing is further from the truth.

"They're very soft. Their skin is incredibly thick, but very sensitive. They can feel everything," he said. In captivity, they enjoy human contact and often times they will sit there and let you rub them for hours. They're gentle in that way.

His brother, Rolfe, finds rhinos to be "amazing individuals" who often vocalize with squeaking noises when they're about to be fed.

And they're intelligent. Robin Radcliffe says Minah is "like

a giant rhino dog who will follow you around and look for bananas in your pocket. She'll open her mouth so you can look into it. She'll lie down so you can rub her belly."

Minah and her species could be extinct within the next few decades without stricter conservation efforts and improved breeding in captivity. Radcliffe acknowledged that such a fact makes it hard to keep a positive attitude at times.

"If you could see how amazing and primitive and prehistoric they look and yet how intelligent and beautiful they are — well, that's what keeps me going from day to day."

"As things go forward, it will really be a reflection on mankind. I think it's going to be up to all of us how we live our lives, the products we buy and even where we live that will ultimately determine the effect on species that are critically endangered right now."

Twin brothers, single goal

Radcliffe's interest in wildlife and conservation started at an early age. As a child growing up in the west-central Wisconsin city of Black River Falls, he recalled poring through his parents' National Geographic magazines, "looking at all these exotic places and animals."

Radcliffe and his twin brother had the same education — from kindergarten through college in River Falls, Wis., then vet school at the University of Minnesota, before parting career paths in the early '90s.

Radcliffe was certified by the American College of Zo-

PROFILE

Dr. Robin Radcliffe

Age: 37

Born: Black River Falls, Wis.

Home: Glen Rose, Texas.

Education: University of Wisconsin-River Falls, veterinary school, University of Minnesota.

Favorite animal: Duh.

Scariest experience: It's not being charged by a rhino. Radcliffe and his twin brother Rolfe were returning from a kayak trip in Alaska last month when their tiny bush plane crashed on takeoff. "We were only 10 feet in the air, but the plane was badly damaged."

When people find out he's a rhino vet: "They don't know enough to make a good assessment of what that means. I tell them that even though I get to fly all over the world, it isn't all fun and games. But I do feel lucky every day to do this."

ological Medicine, with a subspecialty in wildlife, making him just one of seven vets in the world with that certification. He pursued that interest with an internship at Fossil Rim in 1994, which eventually led to a full-time position overseeing the 1,100 animals on the 3,000-acre preserve.

His brother decided to pursue a residency in equine surgery at Cornell in Ithaca, N.Y.; Radcliffe's focus became rhinos. "Evolution-wise, rhinos and horses are very close, so we've been able to combine our interests," said Robin.

That's what has made the Radcliffe brothers' dual specialties so popular with conservationists.

"They're working hard to solve the mystery of the art and science of reproducing the Sumatran rhino," said Dr. Tom Foote, program director of the International Rhino Foundation. "The Sumatran has proven to be the most difficult of any large species of mammal to reproduce in captivity."

The brothers travel together to Malaysia, Indonesia and South Africa to perform sur-



Provided by Robin and Rolfe Radcliffe. Rhinos often make squeaking noises when they're about to be fed. Dr. Robin Radcliffe says Minah, above, follows him around, looking for bananas in his pockets.

gery and help with reproductive management.

Robin developed an expertise in rhino ultrasound, and I do the same with horses. So it's pretty easily applied," Rolfe Radcliffe said in a phone interview.

The two help game preserves and other facilities to manage their rhino populations. Using ultrasound, the brothers help determine which rhinos are pregnant and which may be fertile, as well as operating on females with common ailments such as uterine tumors.



This is one of Radcliffe's illustrations — from a book he wrote for children about a hornless rhinoceros. He has a passion for conservation education, and thinks it's the key to rhino preservation.

Educating for change

Radcliffe believes that the future of endangered species lies in the hands of children.

"I was amazed when I met children in Malaysia and they didn't know what a Sumatran rhino was," Radcliffe said. He realized that "all the work I do medically just reaches a few people. No kid is ever going to read it."

So he wrote and illustrated a children's book, "The Hornless Rhinoceros," which he has

been sending to publishers. Through the story of a young Sumatran rhino whose horns are coveted for medicine, he hopes to educate children everywhere about the plight of rhinos.

"The rhino's future is tied closely to how humans view them," he said. "Changing some of the traditions that are killing rhinos has to start with the children."

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