

RHINOPHILIGHTS



... finally bring back our
Rhinophilights section and
... introduce you to
Dee Nelson, swing keeper
(water) at the Reid Park Zoo in
Tucson, Arizona.

Dee has been with the Zoo for
three years and works mostly
in the hoofed stock. She
spent eight years working with
primates then cats and bears at
the Audubon Zoo in New
Orleans. Dee always enjoyed
animals when she was young
lunger and thought she might
be a vet but she eventually got
a B.A. in retail marketing and
spent nine years in management
working for K-Mart until she
said, "No more!" Because
K-Mart moved her around Dee
got the opportunity to visit zoos
in different cities. By the time
she quit K-Mart, she had
decided to "do zoos." Armed
with a certificate in biological
fields training from Santa Fe
Community College in
Gainesville, FL (which has an
eight acre zoo on campus) in
1960, Dee found a job at
Audubon which was expanding
and needed keepers. She was

trained on the job.

Although it seems like an exotic,
alluring job, Dee reminded me
that, "You can't work in this
profession and just call it a job.
The pay is low and it is not a
nice, clean air conditioned job."
In her present position at Reid
Park, Dee was trained on every
area including the kitchen. She
sometimes has to fill in for
others and occasionally gets to
do special projects. Currently,
she is working with the rhinos
and giraffes the most. When
asked about her kinship with the
rhinos, Dee replied, "They're so-
they're rhinos, what can you say?
They have a personality."

At one time, there was a
possibility of getting them to
breed. Dee liked the idea of
being a part of this and she
started by taking blood from
their ears (training them to stand
for it) for a Vitamin E study.
That caused her to work with
them more.

Rhino Routine. The rhinos are
put in a barn and given alfalfa
pellets, bermuda and alfalfa hay

and oats and a liquid Vitamin E
supplement. The rhinos are
locked out of the exhibit and I
go into the exhibit to rake left-
over hay, take it away (along
with 'rhino remnants') and
bring fresh food. I make sure
there is a good mud wallow,
lock the gate, let them out,
drain their drinker, wash down
the barn and drinker and give
everything a visual inspection.
I put fly ointment around their
eyes. The egrets in the enclosure
help control the fly population.
Our rhinos consume about
35-40 pounds of Bermuda and
20-30 pounds of alfalfa daily
along with about 5 gallons of
pellets and oats."

"Yabanga (female) and Zubulu
(male) have the same father and
they come from the San Diego
Wild Animal Park. They are
about 20 years old and have
been at our zoo for about 17
years. Zubulu is less shy and
he will often move Yabanga out
of the way. (Greed? Protection?
I don't know)"



(Rhino highlights continued)

When asked what else she might like to do, Dee's answer was, "I cannot imagine myself doing anything else!" She added, "You learn things from books but most of it is working with the animals since they all have different personalities.

"I'm conservation-oriented for all the critters. I wish they could all go back in the wild and there was no danger of extinction. I wish that for every animal - and that includes snakes."

Finally, Dee wanted to extend many thanks to those who participated in the **Bowling for Rhinos** fundraiser this past summer. Tucson raised almost \$1700 which was more than last year. Oh and by the way, guess who was the worst bowler of the night? You guessed it! I got the supreme honor of keeping the "Bolus Bowler" award until next year. This unique plaque has a big ball of rhino dung plopped right on the award. Tres chic, n'est-ce pas?



Zibulu coming...



...and going!

To order Zoo Deo fertilizer and other products, including a t-shirt (see insert), call 1-800-4-LUV-Deo (1-800-458-6366)

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS...

The next *Really, Rhinos!* is our holiday edition. Because I know you want time to buy all those rhino presents for yourselves and your loved ones, the issue will be sent out in late November. If anyone has anything to sell or knows of someone who will make rhinabilia available, please give me all necessary information no later than November 13th.



Really, Rhinos! is published quarterly. Annual subscriptions are \$15 (\$20 overseas) of which \$5 is donated to rhino projects.

Reader feedback and rhino citations should be reported to Judyth Lessee, Editor, *Really, Rhinos!*, PO Box 1285, Tucson, Z 85702-1285. (602) 327-9048.

Note: If you find errors, please know they are printed for those who always look for them. We try to print something for everybody.

Really, Rhinos!
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