

ZOOGOER

March-April 1986



Reflections on 1985:
FONZ Annual Report (p. 3)

ZOOGOER

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FONZ 1985 ANNUAL REPORT

Friends of the National



is a nonprofit organization of individuals and families who are interested in supporting Zoo programs in education, research, and conservation. As members of FONZ, you and your family receive many benefits—publications, discount privileges, and invitations to special programs and activities to make your zoogoing more enjoyable and educational.

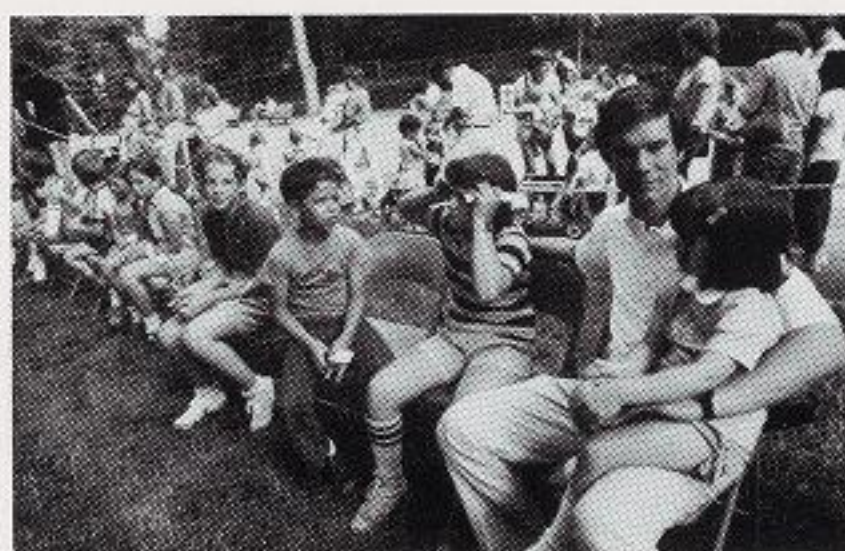
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The National Zoological Park is located in the 3000 block of Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, (202) 673-4717. Weather permitting, the Zoo is open every day except Christmas. Hours: From May 1 through September 15, grounds are open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; buildings, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. From September 16 through April 30, grounds are open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; buildings, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

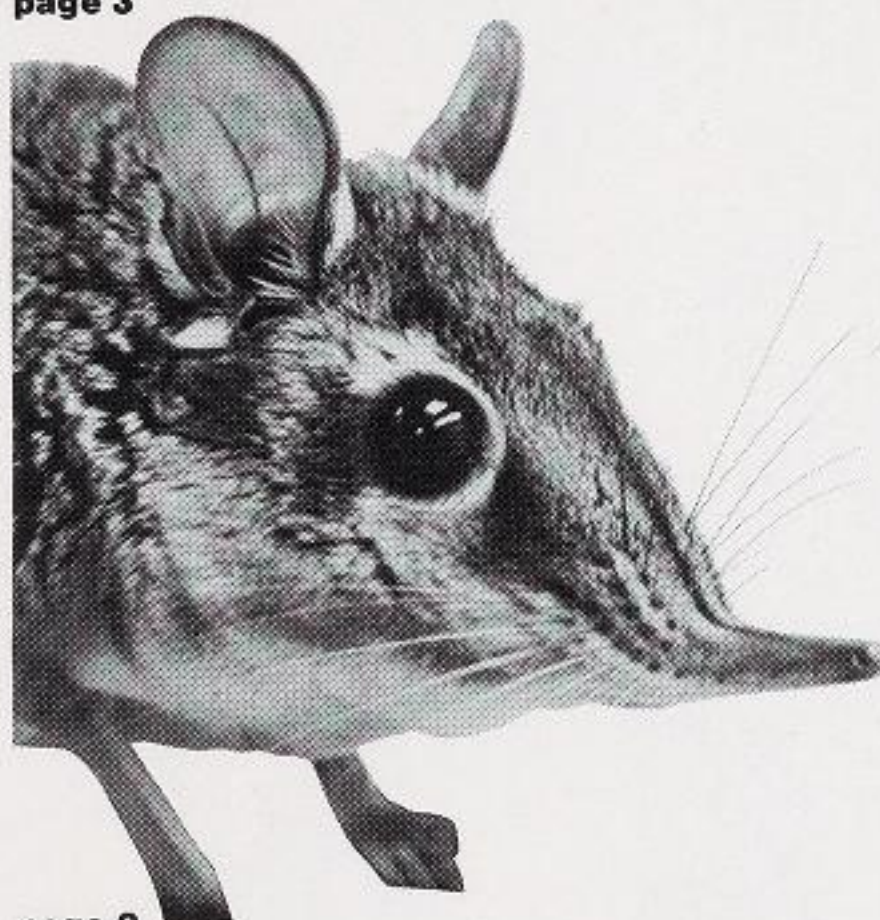
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Cover Photos: A Barbary macaque pauses beside the Monkey Island moat (front cover). Pandu, a male Indian rhinoceros, explores his new home at the Elephant House (back cover). Cover photos by Milton Tierney.



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Zoo Booksigning

FONZ Guide Sally Tongren, author of *To Keep Them Alive: Wild Animal Breeding*, and Robert Hoage, editor of *Animal Extinctions: What Everyone Should Know*, will sign their newly published books on May 4 at the FONZ Bookstore/Gallery. Call 673-4957 for details.

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Stocking the Modern Ark: Animal

J. Fisher and R. Kraft

Negotiations to acquire zoo animals can sometimes be as complicated as a Geneva conference. The business of getting an interesting mix of exotic animals is one of the most intriguing since Noah stocked the Ark.

Often international in scope, the search sometimes sends zoo curators to the four corners of the world. They pay cash for animals, trade animals for other animals, and give or lend their charges to other zoos for breeding purposes. Modern zoos have become increasingly successful at breeding animals in captivity, which makes them less reliant on animal purchases.

"Our goal," said the National Zoo's Public Affairs Director Robert Hoage, "is to become a producer of wildlife rather than a consumer."

"A lot of considerations are involved before we acquire a new animal," explained William Xanten, the National Zoo's curator of exhibits. "We must decide whether a creature has educational value and will be of interest to the public. Will it help show the diversity of animal life? Is the species so little known to science that it will have great value as a subject of study? Will it fit into a breeding program at the Zoo? Can our facilities accommodate it? By acquir-

ing an endangered animal, are we furthering the cause of conservation?"

The main criteria, said NZP Registrar Judith Block, are public education and species preservation. Most exhibit animals are chosen for their educational merit. The animals in the Small Mammal House, for example, are chosen because they are active or visually interesting. Reptile Collection Manager Michael Davenport favors the Surinam toad not only because it is long-lived and readily available, but also because it has an unusual reproductive feature—the male imbeds eggs in the female's back.

Once the decision has been made to

Jessie Cohen, NZP Graphics



Increasingly, zoos are relying on their own breeding programs to maintain their animal populations. Three of the National Zoo's six orangutans, for example, were born at NZP.

Milton Tierney



In 1985, the San Diego Zoo loaned NZP a male Indian rhinoceros, Pandu, for a planned breeding program. Although the

Acquisition at the National Zoo

get a new animal, the National Zoo usually checks with other zoos in the United States to determine what's available and where. Other valuable sources of information include the computerized International Species Inventory System and the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums' monthly newsletter "Animal Exchange."

Very little is certain in the zoo pricing business. The "king of beasts," the African lion, has thrived in captivity and is a glut on the market, while scarce Asian and African hoofed stock are expensive and difficult to obtain. Moreover, the cost of animal acquisi-

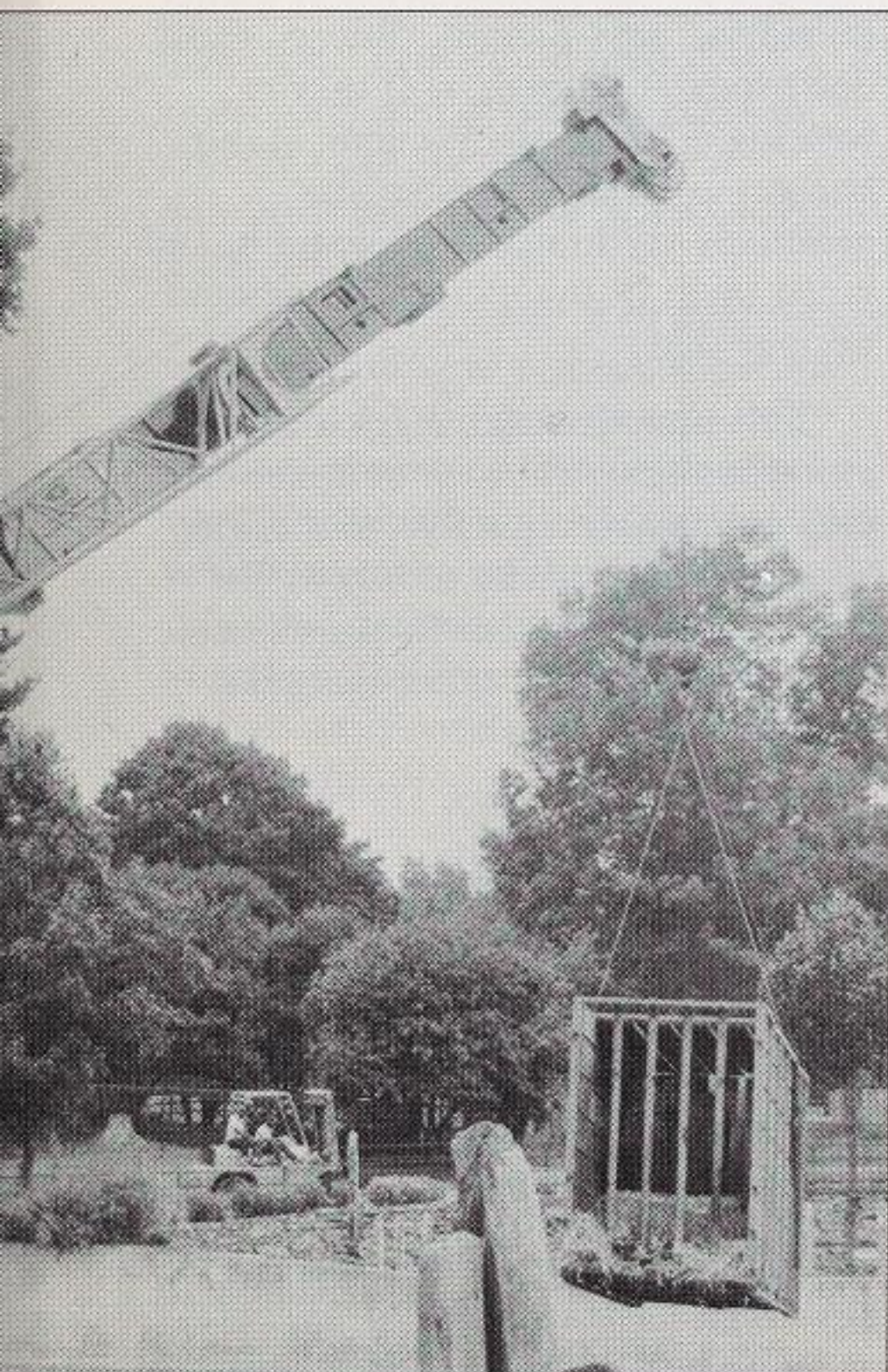
tion has soared far above the "sticker price," due, in part, to higher transportation costs and increased administrative work caused by the complex new restrictions that govern trade in endangered species.

Even "free" animals from overseas are expensive. For example, several years ago, the Rotterdam Zoo gave NZP two cranes. The birds' shipping and crating costs from Holland to New York were \$1,292; the 30-day quarantine period and feedings in New York cost \$294; a broker who met the shipment, cleared it through customs, and delivered it to the quarantine station had to be paid

\$1,032; finally, because airline schedules precluded shipping the cranes by plane, two keepers drove them to the National Zoo at a cost of \$300. The gift from Holland cost NZP nearly \$3,000.

This situation is not unusual. "The cost of shipping," Xanten said, "often exceeds the cost of the animals."

When the Zoo needs cash beyond its federal allocations to acquire animals, said Finance Officer James Fitzpatrick, it turns to an NZP fund that is supported by animal sales and private donations. In addition, two years ago FONZ established the Theodore H. Reed Animal Acquisition



loan was free, Pandu's transportation costs were not. The bill for his 2,713-mile trip was paid with ZooFari proceeds.



When breeding programs are exceptionally successful, zoos may trade or sell surplus animals to each other. NZP bought this American flamingo last year from the Philadelphia Zoo.



Jessie Cohen, NZP Graphics

ZooFari

Each year, FONZ adopts a region of the world as the focus of ZooFari, its annual fundraiser to support the National Zoo's animal acquisition activities.

On Thursday evening, May 22, the National Zoo will come alive as ZooFari '86 celebrates the bravura of Brazil, a country rich in culture, cuisine, and wildlife. The National Zoo has enjoyed a fruitful relationship with Brazil, typified by its successful program to breed the rare golden lion tamarins and reintroduce them to the Brazilian jungle.

Zoo supporters attending the event will have an opportunity to share the excitement of a Brazilian street market at the silent auction, taste native cuisine, and experience a night in Rio as they samba to a big band sound.

All proceeds from the event will support the National Zoo's animal acquisition priorities, including special loans from other zoos, breeding of endangered species, new purchases, and paying costs associated with gifts.

Due to cost limitations, ZooFari invitations will not be mailed to FONZ members except by request. For a personal invitation to the \$100/ticket event or information about donating to the Theodore H. Reed Animal Acquisition Fund, contact Jim Mathews at 673-4960.

Fund, which last year paid the transportation costs of the zoo's new Indian rhinoceros. This fund is also supported by private donations and by an annual benefit event, ZooFari (see sidebar, left).

Spiraling prices are nothing new. For years, zoo directors have been trying to save money through shrewd trading. Even before World War II, an orangutan went for \$3,000, and a pair of giraffes cost \$7,000—princely sums in those days.

Today, paper money has been replaced by paperwork, as zoos around the world cooperate to swap or loan animals on a long-term basis. Such arrangements allow zoos to channel more money into breeding programs and health care for exotic animals, rather than their purchase.

In fact, most zoos would much rather trade than sell, getting something in return. Said Xanten, "With us a sale is a last resort. For instance, we would rather give a male giraffe to another zoo to put in a breeding program for a few years. Then if something happened to our male, we could always go to that zoo and ask for the return of our animal or one of its offspring."

While direct, one-for-one trades are rare, zoos often send animals to other zoos to build a surplus credit position. For instance, zoo A might send a wattled crane worth \$6,000 to zoo B and get nothing in trade. But at a later date, if zoo B finds itself with a surplus pair of Stanley cranes worth \$2,000, zoo A may receive these birds and still wind up with a credit of \$4,000, which can be used to obtain additional mammals, birds, or reptiles in the future.

Breeding Programs

Zoos also cooperate in breeding programs that are an increasingly common means of acquiring new animals. The National Zoo's 1984 success in breeding Cuban crocodiles—with a female loaned by West Germany's Wilhelma Zoo—will benefit several zoos seeking to acquire these rare reptiles.

The most costly way to obtain an animal is to buy one from abroad, said Block, who oversees much of the detailed paperwork involved in an acquisition. In addition to the purchase price, the Zoo must pay for quarantines, health tests, crating, and air shipping. But no one complains about the paperwork, because it serves to protect the animals. Permits, said Primate Collection Manager Lisa Stevens, are "a very positive result of legislative actions both here and abroad."

Although their role has declined in recent decades, dealers still play a part in the acquisition of animals, especially those that must pass through overseas quarantine centers. It might cost a zoo \$20,000 to locate a sable antelope, clear it through the various overseas quarantine procedures, and fly it to the United States. On the other hand, a dealer importing a group of animals could bring the same antelope to the United States for \$7,500.

"I know the zoo business may sometimes look rather commercial to outsiders," said Xanten, "But we really don't look at animals as if they're wearing dollar signs. We look at our charges as living creatures and genuinely try to maintain, exhibit, and breed them in the most humane manner possible.

"This includes exchanges, trades, and what-have-you. We've sent surplus animals to reputable zoos asking absolutely nothing in return, rather than risk selling them to questionable roadside exhibits or other marginal operations."

More and more, zoos are relying on breeding programs to preserve disappearing species and stock the modern "ark," so animal acquisitions, especially loans, are increasingly motivated by conservation goals. "But," said NZP spokesman Hoage, "the public also clearly benefits from our successful participation in the animal acquisition process because we never lose sight of our goal—to generate public respect and reverence for wildlife by giving people a chance to experience animals close-up." □

FONZ helped
stock the NZP
"ark" by bringing
Pandu to
Washington
(p. 20).



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