

# JOHN BALL ZOO NEWS

SUMMER 2017

## Introducing... Wyatt



Photo courtesy of Chattanooga Zoo



# JOHN BALL ZOO NEWS

Volume 34 Issue No. 3  
August 2017

## Mission Statement:

We inspire our community to be actively engaged in the conservation of wildlife and our natural environment.

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**FROM the CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**August 2017**

## **DEAR FRIENDS,**

Many of you may be unaware that it is currently illegal under Michigan law to breed Large Carnivores since 2000. The Legislature was well intentioned when it revised the Large Carnivore Act in 2000. Lawmakers did the appropriate due diligence and research as they worked with many groups, scientists, experts, etc., before changing the law. There was however a glaring error in the legislation. The mistake led to the unintended consequence of making it illegal to breed lions, leopards (including snow leopards and clouded leopards), bears, cougars, jaguars, tigers, and cheetahs, even in AZA accredited zoos in Michigan such as yours.

This made the loss of our female snow leopard even more devastating. She was a very popular animal for our visitors and the zoo community, as we participate in the snow leopard Species Survival Plan (SSP). The plan takes into consideration the ability to breed the animal and continue the species when deciding where animals go throughout the world. The flaw in the Michigan law has consequences for our zoo as we cannot breed them to play our role in saving the species from extinction.

We are pleased to announce that despite this challenge, we will soon receive a male snow leopard. We may even have the opportunity to receive a second one later this fall. The new animals will be past breeding age, but we are proud to be able to serve these magnificent endangered animals by providing a home and care as they live out their lives. We know they will provide joy to you and will serve as ambassadors for their endangered brothers and sisters.

We are grateful for this news, but we also remain concerned. This law may have an impact on another popular animal at the Zoo, the tigers. In good conscience and as part of our participation in Species Survival Plans (SSP), we may not be able to keep the current tigers.

They are of breeding age and are important to the success of the SSP and the continuation of their species. Our mission of Conservation is at the core of John Ball Zoo. In some cases, this requires tough decisions. This does not mean that we would not have any tigers in the future. It does mean no tiger breeding would or could occur, as the animals are too old or too young, at least until the law is corrected.

After five years of working with our legislators, the law remains unchanged. It has been frustrating for all of us. Participating in Species Survival Plans is an important way we contribute to saving animals from extinction. The SSP committees have been patient as we have tried to get the law corrected. Every year, there are new recommendations for the placement of breeding pairs. The SSP committees make their recommendations on an animal-by-animal, institution-by-institution basis. These decisions increase the likelihood of breeding success and minimize the loss of genetic diversity within the species.

The law in Michigan puts us at a disadvantage when these decisions are made and it needs to change. We are working hard to change the Law. This fall, we will join West Michigan lawmakers to introduce legislation to solve the problem. We may need your help as we move through the process. Please stay tuned. We may reach out to you to call or write your legislator or the governor to support our effort to save these magnificent animals from extinction.

As always, thank you for your support.

*Peter*

**PETER D'ARIENZO**

Actively Conserving - Always Celebrating

## ANIMAL NEWS

One of the world's most adored animals arrives at the Zoo

# WYATT

**Wyatt is a 5 year old male red panda.** He was born at the Bronx Zoo in 2012 and comes to us from Chattanooga Zoo in Tennessee. He spent his first month here in quarantine just to be certain that he is healthy but he got lots of attention and admiration during that time.

Zoo veterinarian, Dr. Ryan Colburn, gave Wyatt an exam when he arrived and checked him over thoroughly again before he moved into his new home at the top of the waterfall. Wyatt got to know the zookeepers who will care for him and continue his training. He already knows how to present his paws, mouth and underside for routine exams. Visitors will be able to watch Wyatt in regular training sessions. He's a smart and responsive student. Red pandas usually lead solitary lives in the wild and we are not planning to add another panda soon.



JBZ Staff photos



Wyatt is checking out the plants in his new home

Although red pandas are not related to giant (black and white) pandas, both species depend on bamboo for about 90% of their diet. In fact, the word "panda" comes from a phrase which means "bamboo eater". Both species also share a modified wrist bone that functions like a 6th digit making it easier for them to strip the leaves off bamboo stalks. John Ball Zoo is hoping to grow most of Wyatt's daily food needs right on site. He also gets leaf-eater biscuits and a variety of raw vegetables.

Red Pandas are endangered. It is estimated that their numbers have declined by 50% in recent years. They are difficult to study in the wild because of their nocturnal, tree dwelling habits but there are fewer than 10,000 wild adults and some believe the number could be as low as 2,500. The Zoo is participating in the AZA Species Survival Plan for red pandas which manages zoo populations and breeding.



# ANIMALS OUTDOORS

## Small changes make big differences in the lives of the animals

Did you notice that some of the animals that you usually visit in the Treasures of the Tropics building are now outside? The spur-thighed tortoises have moved into what was until recently the alligator enclosure. The red-footed tortoises are enjoying the summer in a newly configured space across from the budgie aviary. Both species of tortoises are quite active in their new 'digs'.



The black-footed cats are also spending some of their time outdoors. Their habitat in the Tropics building doubled in size this summer to give them a new outside yard. A short tube connects it to their indoor space. The cats were a bit timid about exploring at first. Now they are often seen surveying their new domain and the curious creatures next door (the tortoises)! They haven't given up their nocturnal habits entirely and spend lots of time snoozing.

When it comes to animal care, our staff is always looking for ways to enrich the day-to-day lives of our animals. The bears, pumas, lemurs, howler monkey family and a few others choose where they wish to spend their day. The doors connecting their indoor and outdoor spaces are left open so they have access to their entire environment all day and all night. During warm summer nights, it's not surprising that many of them prefer the cooler outdoor air.

In winter, the cold tolerant critters seem to enjoy a snow day and often choose to stay outside.

# LEGENDS *of*

Over its 126 year history John Ball Zoo has been fortunate to have many notable supporters who have fueled the growth and development that have made our Zoo one of West Michigan's most iconic institutions. This year John Ball Zoo is pleased to establish a special tradition - the Legends of the Zoo dinner - to recognize and celebrate the individuals who have most helped make the Zoo such a cherished place. In this inaugural year of the dinner John Ball Zoo is especially proud to honor Bea Idema and David Frey.

## Bea Idema

Bea Idema has a long history with John Ball Zoo. In fact, one of Bea's favorite memories of John Ball Zoo and Park stems from her early courtship with her late husband, Bill. Bea joyfully recounts stories of how as young adults she and Bill often cruised the Zoo's parkways together in Bill's Ford Model T.

Since those days, Bill and Bea's spirit of generosity have benefited many in Grand Rapids and around the world. Whether it was a lead gift to a multi-million dollar project like the Secchia Center in Grand Rapids or a gift to a neighborhood school, all their contributions have had impact. The list of non-profits that have benefited is simply too long to list but have included a diversity of organizations and causes ranging from the Grand Rapids Public Museum to Habitat for Humanity, from the Michigan Colleges Foundation to the Salvation Army Kroc Center, from the Grand Rapids Art Museum to Camp Henry and many, many more.



Among the many institutions that have benefited from Bill and Bea's generosity, John Ball Zoo was never far from their hearts. After Bill's passing, Bea continued in that spirit of giving that was such a part of their life together. In 2010, Bea and the Bill and Bea Idema Foundation gave John Ball Zoo the largest donation in its history. That gift not only created a new icon for the city of Grand Rapids - the Idema Funicular and the Idema Forest Realm - but it allowed the Zoo to expand by eleven acres.

Bea understood the Zoo's need to grow and also understood the hilltop would remain inaccessible without a means to transport visitors up to the top. She and Bill had ridden funiculars in Europe and she was struck by the Zoo's plans to build one. Bea Idema's gift literally changed both the landscape, and the future of our city's Zoo.

# the ZOO

## David Frey

Similarly, David Frey's place as a giant among Grand Rapids' business and philanthropic community leaders is well known. He holds a special place in the pantheon of Zoo Legends.

David's ties to Grand Rapids run deep, starting with his grandfather, John E. Frey. John was born on the city's west side in 1880, not far from where John Ball Zoo would be established eleven years later. As an adult, John Frey founded Union Bank and Trust Company, which was subsequently chaired by David's father and then by David himself. In his early years David spent time away from west Michigan, first for schooling and then during the Vietnam War. Each time David returned to the city of his birth, where he has worked tirelessly to make it a better place for all.

Through his individual support as well as through the Frey Foundation, David has made a crucial impact in many areas of the arts and culture, in improving the lives of women and children, and the protection of the environment. By helping to create and direct the Grand Action Committee, David has worked to foster many of the most significant public-private partnerships. Over the past few decades these partnerships have transformed and expanded the economic landscape of Grand Rapids.



David and the Frey family have also made an indelible mark on John Ball Zoo. The family made possible both the first penguin exhibit, in 1984, as well as the current penguin exhibit in the 1995 Living Shores Aquarium. David himself was one of the chairs of the Restore the Roar campaign that brought lions back to John Ball Zoo in 2008. Throughout the years, David's leadership and advice has been truly instrumental in helping guide the Zoo to its current levels of success.




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John Ball Zoo is incredibly fortunate to count Bea Idema and David Frey among its most visionary supporters and it is with great honor - and indeed joy - that we look forward to honoring them as Legends of the Zoo.

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## SPECIAL EVENTS

**John Ball ZOO goes... BOO!**

West Michigan's  
favorite  
family Halloween event!

**ZOO GOES BOO** takes place over two weekends:  
Friday, Saturday and Sunday - October 20, 21 and 22  
October 27, 28 and 29  
10:00am to 3:00pm

Dress up - dress down - and just clown around at the Zoo for trick-or-treating,  
over the top decorations, dancing, music, animals and more.

If you are a JBZ Member, join us for **MONSTER MASH:**  
Thursday - October 19, from 5 to 7:30pm  
Enjoy the best of Zoo Goes Boo with a few extra treats.  
Tickets available on-line at [jbzoo.org](http://jbzoo.org)

Thank you to our sponsors for your generous support

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## BE OUR FRIEND!



If you are already a friend or follower, you may have noticed a lot more action on our social media outlets lately. . . Welcome, Kat Wille, our new full time Social Media Coordinator. Kat is not only exploding on Facebook and Instagram, she's expanded our platforms to include Twitter, LinkedIn, and Snapchat. From amazing animal facts, to giveaways, to zoo announcements, we have been posting like never before.



Want to share photos of your Zoo visit? Use the hashtag #johnballzoo. You might even see your pictures and videos appear on our pages.

# RENOVATIONS

## WHY IS THAT BUILDING EMPTY?

The old building that most recently housed the baboons on one side and the family of colobus monkeys on the other stands empty these days. It was state-of-the-art exhibit design in 1975 when it was built to house lions and tigers. Now it doesn't meet AZA standards for animal care. In fact, modification to bring it up to code would have to be radical. The Zoo decided to move forward with an entirely new plan.

Construction will begin late this fall to replace the old building with the West Valley Pathway. This new path will make it easier for visitors to navigate the Zoo. The West Valley Pathway will start in front of warthogs and connect with the Forest Trail on a comfortable, ADA compliant walkway. It will create a more comfortable grade to travel for everyone. The rambling walkway will also provide developed space around it making way for future animal exhibits.

Several generations of lions and tigers lived their lives in this space. Pictured here are the last ones to occupy the exhibit. The tiger is Krapinka and the lion is Docha who spent his first few weeks in the 'old lion/tiger exhibit' until 'Lions of Lake Manyara' was ready for him.



SITE LAYOUT AND GRADING PLAN



WESTERN VALLEY PATHWAY

JUNE 19, 2017



## COFFEE BREAK



# shaded grounds

## VISIT OUR COFFEE SHOP

As temperatures drop, stay warm on your Zoo walk with a stop at Shaded Grounds Coffee. Shaded Grounds is located at the front of the Zoo near the John Ball Zoo Statue. The menu includes shade grown coffee, cappuccinos, lattes, and an out of this world hot chocolate for the kids.

Shaded Grounds only sells shade grown coffee and espresso. Traditionally, coffee shrubs or trees were grown in the shade under a diverse canopy of forest trees. This method of coffee farming discouraged weeds, protected the crop from frost and encouraged pollinators as well as a wide variety of migratory birds. Coffee takes longer to ripen in the shade but also tastes better.

Large commercial coffee growers wanted to harvest their crops faster and produce higher yields. About 25 years ago, coffee varieties that would grow in full sun were introduced and many growers cleared forests to create more acreage in the sun. The loss of habitat had a huge impact on bio-diversity in coffee growing regions. Birds were among the most severely affected species.



Photo by Gotza Primke

Full sun coffee plantation



**Shaded Grounds also serves;**  
cinnamon rolls, muffins, cookies, fresh made fudge, smoothies and frozen coffee drinks.

Some large producers and small farmers are returning to the more traditional and bio-friendly methods. We are proud to serve shade grown coffee at the Zoo. We get to give you a great product and help support bio-diversity at the same time.



Photo by World Agroforestry Centre

Shade grown coffee



Photo by Brian Smith, USFWS

# We Love Zoo Memories

Recently we received a donation from a woman in memory of her mother. Along with her contribution, she shared a priceless memory. All of us at the Zoo believe we help make memories. When people share those memories, that's truly a gift for the entire staff, volunteers, and board members. Enjoy Hildrene's memory.

*"The enclosed donation is being sent in memory of my mother, Margaret Blankespoor, who passed away one year ago tomorrow. When I was a child, one of our family's favorite things to do on Memorial Day was come to the Zoo for breakfast and then go see the animals. This was not a simple continental style breakfast, but a full scale event. The camp stove was brought along and there were pancakes for any relatives that showed up. Dad and Mom continued this tradition for years - even until the group included adult grandchildren."*

What a wonderful memory and such a wonderful gift. Thank you for telling us a treasured family story.

# BACKYARD BUTTERFLIES



The newly expanded Butterfly House is located on the boardwalk across from the flamingos. This screened in area includes a variety of native Michigan butterflies in all stages of their life cycle - from egg to caterpillar to chrysalis and butterfly.

Photo: Macomb Paynes

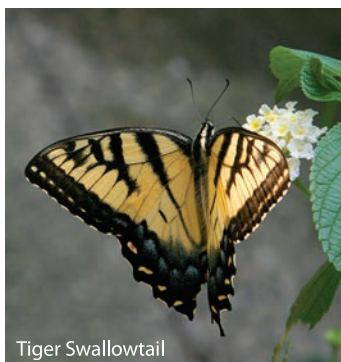


There are monarchs of course and they will be released over the next few weeks starting with our Monarch Day event on September 9. Many of them stay and feed on flowers in the Zoo before starting their long migration south to Mexico.

This year there are more species than ever on exhibit. Their color and variety is a constant source of wonder.



Polyphemus Moth



Tiger Swallowtail



Hummingbird Clearwing Moth

JBZ Staff photos

## Mark Your Calendar



### MONARCH DAY

Saturday - September 9  
11 am to 4 pm

Help us bid farewell to the monarch butterflies. This hands-on event is a great way to learn about the monarchs' remarkable migration to Mexico each year.

Butterfly activities all day including a chance to hand release a butterfly



Thank you to SpartanNash for making this event possible!



### Grandparents' Day



Sunday - September 10  
10 am to 4 pm

Buy one grandchild's admission and get a second one FREE

Thank you to  
**PriorityHealth**



Fri, Sat and Sun – Oct 20, 21 and 22  
Oct 27, 28 and 29  
10 am to 3 pm

### LAST OPEN DAY of the 2017 SEASON

**CHRISTMAS** for the **ANIMALS**

Saturday, December 2 - 10 am to 3 pm

Bring an enrichment item for the animals and admission is FREE

Animal demonstrations all day  
Plus a visit with Santa and his reindeer

## MEMBERSHIP

# 10,000 Member Households!

Thanks to your support we reached an all-time high in Zoo memberships.

That number includes more than 1,600 Naturalist level Members - also an all-time high. Naturalist Members are able to bring any four guests with them each visit and also receive unlimited free Funicular rides.

Way to recognize a deal, Members!



Keep an eye out for our next special reciprocal offer in October. John Ball Zoo members will receive free admission to explore at the Grand Rapids Public Museum from October 1 thru 31. Bring your Zoo membership card and photo ID for entry.

GRAND RAPIDS  
PUBLIC MUSEUM | *Be curious.*

Your John Ball Zoo membership is always good for free or reduced admission at over 150 other Zoos and Aquariums.

## SPECIAL EVENTS



# RENDEZOO 2017



## ROCK | ROAR | AND | POUR

Our first 'adults only' evening at the Zoo was a huge success and fun for everyone. The band, Brena, rocked the evening and no one was missing the kids!



# Fall Education Programs

Check out all the fun and learning the Zoo has to offer this fall and winter



## Twilight Tours - Families

Enjoy a twilight tour to see what some of the nocturnal animals are up to at night. Watch the kinkajous crawl around, the mountain lion stalk, and maybe even see the sloth munching its dinner.

## Sprouts Classes - 3 & 4 year olds

Thursday and Friday mornings

September 14 through December 1

These fun classes use loveable children's books to connect children to their favorite Zoo animals. Drop your pre-schooler off for one session or enjoy one each week for the fall season.

## Kid's Night Out - 4 to 12 year olds

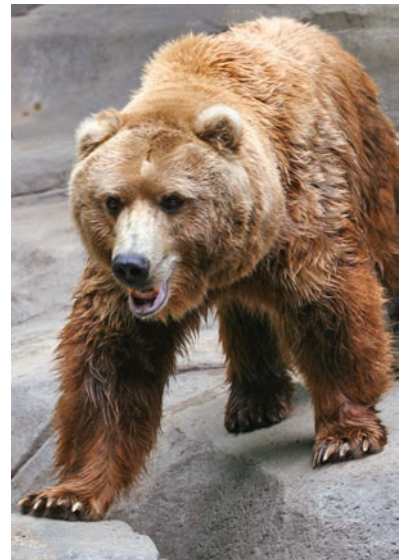
Enjoy a night out while your kids enjoy a wild night at the Zoo. Each session has a different focus, but expect to enjoy fun games, twilight tours in the Zoo, up-close animal encounters, and a pizza dinner.

## Care of Magical Creatures Overnight 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Compare the magical and muggle world of animals to discover what hedgehogs and knarls have in common, go on a scavenger hunt, and maybe enjoy a fun game of quidditch.

## All New! Winter Break Camps

Enjoy day camps during your winter break! Explore the Zoo to discover just what the tigers, bears, and chimps are up to during the snowy months. Single day camps will run from 9 am to 4 pm.



For more information and registration please visit [jbzoo.org](http://jbzoo.org).



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**JOHN BALL ZOO**

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# GREEN TREE PYTHON