

JOHN BALL  
**ZOO NEWS**

AUTUMN 2017

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**







# JOHN BALL ZOO NEWS

Volume 34 Issue No. 4  
November 2017

## Mission Statement:

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

## John Ball Zoo Board of Directors

### Officers

Kyle Irwin - President

Tracey Hornbeck - Vice President

Matt Becker - Secretary

Gary Milligan - Treasurer

### Directors

Lori Cook

Mike Lomonaco

Marilyn Crawford

Dan Molhoek

Mimi Cummings

Rachel Mraz

Steve Edison

Tim Mroz

Jorge Gonzalez

Dean Pacific

Matt Heitmeier

Tim Schowalter

Carol Hennessy

Michael J. Taylor

Matthew Kind

Chris VanBergen

Elizabeth Larson

Harold Voorhees

Jeff Lumpp

Peter D'Arienzo - CEO

ACCREDITED BY THE  
**ASSOCIATION  
OF ZOOS &  
AQUARIUMS**

JBZoo News Autumn 2017 © John Ball Zoo 2017  
Design and layout by Susan Hinkle  
Photos by Susan Hinkle unless otherwise noted





conservation



education



community



celebration

November 2017

## DEAR FRIENDS,

About a year ago, the Zoo team sat down to work on revising our core values. After several weeks of discussion and facilitation, we came together on four core values. The team selected: **Conservation, Education, Community, and Celebration.**

I can't tell you how proud I am of the team's dedication to these values; they have rallied around them, embraced them, and lived their passion for them each and every day. I can't tell you how thankful I am for you - our members and donors. Your support of our efforts enables us to do so much. It allows us to constantly improve our work in **conservation** and **education**, broaden our outreach in the **community**, and **celebrate** the world and its wildlife.

Your membership, your 'round-up', your purchases of food and gifts, your ride on the zipline, your sponsorship in our Animals! Animals! program, your enrollment of your child in our camps and classes, your rental of a picnic pavilion or the Tree House all makes so much of our work possible. All of it makes a difference. All of it matters.

The Zoo provides animal programs to community events, libraries, hospitals, senior centers and more because of you.

Economically disadvantaged families receive a free admission through the JUMP program because of you.

We can provide support and staff to five different conservation field projects in Michigan because of you.

We can steadily make the Zoo more accessible because of you.

We can build new animal habitats because of you.

All of the support you share and the joy you take in our work in **conservation, education, and community** gives us great cause to **celebrate**. We do this with Member's Nights, Monster Mash, birthday parties, weddings, Party for the Planet and so many other events. We **celebrate** our world, our **community**, magnificent animals in our care, and our future.

We **celebrate** you. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

*Peter*

**PETER D'ARIENZO**

Chief Executive Officer







On a warm summer evening, after a busy day exploring his new home, Wyatt settled in for some nap time while his crowd of fans looked on.

Photo: Kat Willie



# Members' Night

## A Red Panda Evening

How do you spot a genuine red panda fan? This admirer left no doubt about his enthusiasm.



Photo: Kat Willie







# LEGENDS *of the* ZOO

The Zoo's first tribute event, 'Legends of the Zoo' was held October 12. It was a great night to honor our first two Legends, Bea Idema and David Frey. 'Legends of the Zoo' was a celebration of our history, successes, and our friends. We are the Zoo so it had to be fun and a real celebration.

There were Ogden Nash poems, arrival by Model A, tegu lizard, dixieland band, confetti and designer fudge for everyone. This event raised funds to help with the Western Valley Pathway.

We can't wait to celebrate again soon.



# **MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE**

## **for the new Western Valley Pathway**

We have some truly exciting news to share. The Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) has awarded John Ball Zoo a very special matching gift challenge grant - in the amount of \$70,000 which will allow us to make our great Zoo even greater!

This matching gift challenge means that every dollar raised by donations to John Ball Zoo before December 31 will be matched by this challenge grant and be worth DOUBLE.

**For example, if you give \$25, MCACA will match your gift with another \$25 ... making it a \$50 total donation to the Zoo.**

**Or, if you send a gift of \$100 ... it will be matched with another gift of \$100 ... meaning your donation will actually be like a \$200 gift for the Zoo. And so on, all the way up to \$70,000!**

And when we say that this matching gift challenge addresses a real need and will make our Zoo greater, we really mean it. With this grant and your donations we will literally remake the Zoo's Western Valley pathway.

We all know that everyone loves the Zoo. Until recently, however, not everyone was able to fully experience it. Our Zoo is built on a hill, and while that makes it beautiful and unique, it also presents some challenges. The hills can make it difficult for those in wheelchairs, for anyone with trouble walking, pushing a stroller or walking with small children.

This started to change just a few years ago when members and donors like you helped build a new pathway to the upper Forest Realm. Everyone can more easily access this part of the Zoo because of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant pathway you helped us create. I can't tell you how many people have told me how much more enjoyable this pathway has made the Zoo.

Now, if you can help us meet this current challenge, we will raise the funding needed to make another such pathway along our western edge. In doing so we will be able to remove several old and unusable animal habitats. In their place, all along this new path, will be space for many new animals to enjoy. Together, we can make our great zoo even greater!

But there is no time to spare. This matching gift challenge ends December 31<sup>st</sup>.

To make your donation please return the enclosed envelope with your gift. Or, you can make a gift online at [jbzoo.org](http://jbzoo.org). Thank you for your support.

**TWICE IS NICE**  
**Please make a gift today when every gift will have double the impact!**

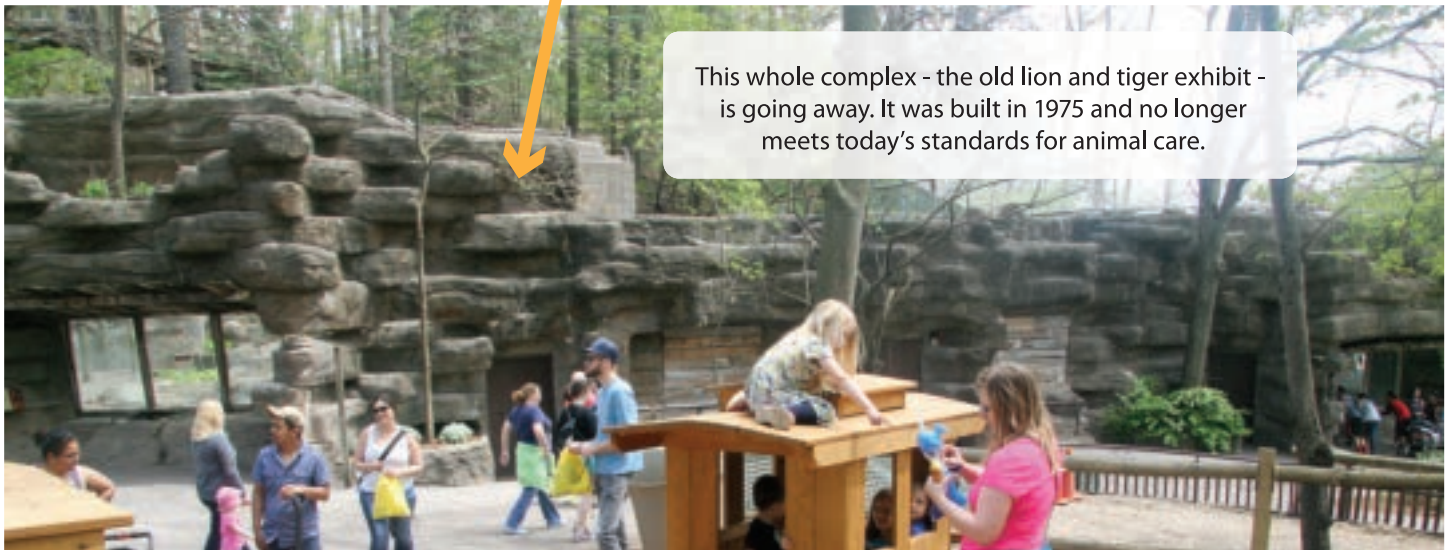


# WESTERN VALLEY PATHWAY



The new Western Valley Pathway will be easier to walk and will provide space for new animals.

## Brand new animal habitat space



This whole complex - the old lion and tiger exhibit - is going away. It was built in 1975 and no longer meets today's standards for animal care.

## Easier access for everyone



© David Chandler



© David Chandler





# BAMBOO

## the Good, the Bad, and the Scary

By Danielle Ferris, JBZ Horticulturist

Wyatt, our newest Zoo resident, is not only super cute, but he also has a super specific diet: bamboo. Some reports list the red panda diet at 65%-75% bamboo, and other reports list a 90%-95% bamboo diet. Either way, that is a lot of bamboo! Just what exactly is bamboo? So, for those inquiring minds among you, here is the down and dirty (and kind of scary) about bamboo.

Bamboo is a member of the grass family - Poaceae, and is more closely related to your lawn than a tree. As a grass, bamboo shares characteristics with other members of the grass family: hollow stems, wind pollination, and no woody secondary growth. It is easy to mistake bamboo for a tree when individual canes (or culms) can be 6 inches across, 40 feet tall, and used as construction material in some countries. In reality, bamboo is just a grass, just like lawn grass, wheat, corn, and sugar cane.

Bamboo has some wonderful and useful qualities. Many bamboos keep their green foliage through the winter, only dropping their leaves when it gets too cold (oftentimes staying green until February or March). Bamboo can grow in some shade and provide height; many shade plants do not provide the same height as bamboo. Eventually the bamboo will provide shade to itself! Bamboo can take a wide range of soil moisture, but not the extremes. It will provide an endless supply of canes for your gardening needs.

## clumpers and spreaders

Bamboo growth is colloquially divided between “clumpers” and “spreaders.” This is an important distinction for anyone considering planting bamboo. Clumping bamboos are relatively well behaved - the original plant gradually increases in size or bulks up. Spreaders, on the other hand, have world domination tendencies. They spread quickly and over quite a distance. There are garden horror stories about “spreaders”. They turn up in the neighbors’ yards, go under the driveway and bust through the concrete, need a backhoe to dig up, etc. Plant the bamboo that best suits your needs now and into the future for this will be a long-term relationship.

We planted 6 species of bamboo for Wyatt. Around the exhibit are 3 species of *Fargesia*, all clumping bamboos which will provide a natural looking setting but won’t take over the woods. At the Central Services Building (CSB), we planted 3 species of spreading bamboos which will eventually provide food for Wyatt. They are planted in long narrow beds to make harvesting easier and have a 28” underground root barrier to keep them from escaping into the Park. Eventually, the CSB bamboos will fill the beds and can be harvested. First, we need the standing green to feed the roots and produce more growth. Harvesting too soon will only delay the process. So for now it is just water and wait - but I have no doubt that the new growth will come.



Photo: Kat Wille



# INNOVATIVE CLASSES for Elementary Students

John Ball Zoo's Education team launches two new STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Math - classes for Kent County students

**Penguinteering** - is for kids in 2nd through 4th grades. The challenge for the students is to design a penguin habitat. The students have to immerse themselves in the behaviors and routines of a penguin. Hands on activities bring to light what Magellanic penguins need in their day to day lives. As students imagine life as a penguin, they create a habitat which will encourage nesting behavior. Their work is then put to the test against some very real environmental constraints.



**Exhibit Design** - is for kids in 5th through 12th grade. This class challenges them to design an exhibit for the Zoo and they soon see that it is a big task. They learn how an animal's needs and adaptations guide the space and the materials they choose. Students use and test their engineering skills as small groups create 3D models of their designs.

Behind the scenes, the Zoo runs on:

**Science**  
**Technology**  
**Engineering**  
**Math**



© Progressive Architecture

Every day, staff members are measuring, building, estimating, ordering, analyzing, installing or repairing something. The Zoo also works with exhibit designers and engineers on major renovations and new exhibits. Each animal habitat brings at least two species together - the animals who will live there and the humans who take care of them or come to visit. It is a complex assignment to provide comfort and safety for both.

Perhaps a former STEM student will be back to design or build for John Ball Zoo one day. Many of our staff members have a long history with the Zoo where they started as students, volunteers, interns or seasonal staff.



Photo: Earl Stringer





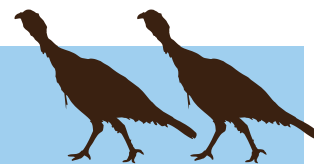
## A Conservation Success Story

By 1900, wild turkeys were considered extinct in Michigan and rare in much of their historical range. Habitat loss and market hunting reduced their numbers from millions to an estimated 30,000 nationwide. Early efforts to restore them relied on farm raised turkeys which were released in several states but those semi-domesticated birds didn't survive. Starting in the 1940's, conservationists trapped wild birds and transported them to other areas. Turkeys spread or were introduced to all of the lower 48 states (plus Hawaii) and parts of southern Canada.

In 1983 the Michigan DNR released turkeys from Missouri and Iowa and they have been increasing ever since. Turkeys live in mixed woodlands with evergreens for winter shelter and nut or berry producing hardwoods for food and night time roosts. They also need clearings where they forage for seeds, fruit, insects and other small animals. Water is important too so they usually stay close to a reliable source. Many of these habitat requirements can be met around a farm or a suburban home. Though turkeys are usually shy of people, they're showing up at backyard bird feeders quite regularly these days.



# WILD TURKEYS



Turkeys have nearly featherless skin on their heads and necks which changes color from gray to blue to red depending on whether the bird is calm or excited. It is especially noticeable on males (toms) who make an impressive display while they are courting females (hens). It seems that toms with really long snoods (see photo) are particularly attractive to the hens.

Turkeys nest on the ground, usually at the base of a large tree. Only hens incubate eggs and tend the chicks. Young turkeys are called poults and they can feed themselves soon after hatching. Poults eat protein rich insects at first and develop a taste for plants after they are one month old. They stay with their mothers for several months while they learn to find food and grow adult plumage. Family groups gather in the winter and form large flocks - up to 200 birds in mild regions where food is plentiful. Mature males band together in separate flocks until breeding season starts in early summer.

Turkeys can fly up to 55 miles per hour over short distances but they walk or run when they can. Their top running speed is 25 miles per hour or about the same as a human track star. Turkeys don't migrate - they are considered nomads because they move around an area to take advantage of available food.

Sometimes people use "turkey" as a rather mild insult but that's all wrong. Wild turkeys are smart, strong and adaptable.



Snood →

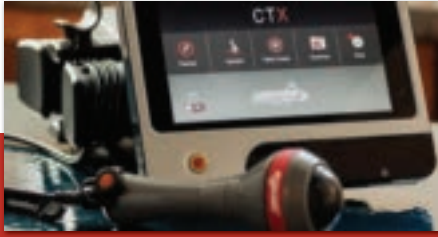
← Wattle

← Caruncles

← Beard

Photo: E. Scott Wheaton





# COMPANION CTX THERAPY LASER

## New technology in animal care

**Zoo veterinarian, Dr. Ryan Colburn, is always looking for ways to provide cutting edge care for the animals.** He heard about the successful use of laser therapy for companion animals like dogs and cats and found that this type of treatment also has applications for Zoo animals. Laser therapy is helping relieve joint and muscle pain as well as speeding up healing times for animals with a variety of conditions.

Laser therapy devices use light energy to reduce inflammation and improve blood flow which helps treat arthritis. It is also useful for a problem which is common in birds, bumblefoot or inflammation of the foot. "We've just gotten started using this new treatment, said Dr. Ryan, "and we're already seeing excellent results. The device uses 'cold laser' which means you can't see the light emanating from the machine. It can be soothing to the animals and veterinarians in domestic animal practice are reporting good results. It's getting a lot of attention!"



Photo: Barbara Molhoek

In July, *Beyond the Ticket* members took a tour of the hospital with Dr. Ryan which led to generous donations from Linda Dejong and the Gayle Booth Zoo Family Fund. Their gifts made it possible to purchase the CTX Therapy Laser for the animal hospital.



Photo: Lynsey Marcellus

"Since we acquired the device, we have treated a goat, sheep and 2 penguins." Dr. Colburn explains "Each patient responds differently, but I'm seeing significant improvement in mobility in some of our worst arthritis patients." Laser therapy is used on humans in rehabilitation facilities and in sports medicine for players and trainers. It is not yet widely used in human medicine or in Zoos. Dr. Colburn's work with the laser will help define the most effective uses for the device.





# HONORING A FRIEND

Ed Elderkin is remembered  
in a gift to our community

You probably know about Wyatt the red panda who arrived at the Zoo this summer. He's definitely a hit and hopefully you've had a chance to greet him in his newly constructed habitat.

But you might not know about the donors who helped make this construction possible or about the special person whose memory is honored with this new exhibit.

It began this spring when Dick Morrison dropped by the Zoo. Dick and his wife, Judy, are long time supporters. Among other things, they made possible the digital educational signs in the Treasures building and some of the beautiful landscaping you see around the Tree House.

On this spring day Dick was happy to see all the activity - the joyful noise of children and families enjoying each other, the animals, and the many other sights and sounds of the Zoo coming alive for another season. But during this particular visit it was clear that Dick also had some other things on his mind. After a thoughtful pause, Dick told us that he and Judy had recently lost a friend, Ed Elderkin, and they had been thinking about doing something to honor Ed's memory.

Ed truly made a difference during his lifetime. He was a local businessman who once owned a lumber company. A community leader and volunteer, he supported and served on multiple non-profit boards such as Junior Achievement, Guiding Light, Mel Trotter, and Spartan YMCA. He gave of his time and talent to many others including AA, Camp Manitou-Lin, his church and area Catholic schools, and Santa Claus Girls - where he delivered gifts for more than 50 years!



Photo: Kat Willie



Sharron and Ed Elderkin

A father, grandfather, great grandfather, and friend to many, Ed was an all around good guy. Ed was also a loving husband, and Dick was especially hopeful to do something that Ed's wife, Sharron, would be proud of and enjoy.

So, a few weeks later Dick, Judy, and Sharron came to tour the Zoo together. It had been some time since the Elderkins had last visited but Sharron had fond memories and was impressed with the Zoo's growth and development. At the time, we were working on designs for the red panda habitat. We shared our plans and drawings with the group as well as information about red pandas and their plight in the wild.

Sharron was certain that our community, and especially the kids, would love a red panda. She thought this new addition would be great at the top of the waterfall, where we intended to build it, and was delighted to hear about the Morrisons' plan to honor Ed. Not only that, but Sharron decided to join them with a generous gift of her own! Together, their support made it possible to open our wonderful red panda exhibit and we could not be more thankful.

In so many ways, the Zoo brings together many of the elements that were important to Ed, his family, his wife Sharron, and his friends. Community. Family time spent together. Education. The outdoors and beauty of our natural world.

We feel privileged to be a part of Ed's legacy.





Ed Elderkin with family

John Ball Zoo's new Red Panda habitat is one of the largest in the country.

Wyatt enjoys ample space, bamboo grown here on site, and temperature-controlled decking that keeps him cool in the summer and warm in the winter.



Photo: Kat Willie



# Holiday Shopping at the Zoo

## GIFTS of the WILD

**Open daily through Saturday  
December 2 - 10 am to 4 pm**

Watch for the AFTER THANKSGIVING SALE ON  
Saturday, November 25 and Sunday, November 26  
**25% OFF EVERYTHING**

Remember - if you need that perfect animal  
related gift even after we've closed for the season,  
call 616-336-4327 to make an appointment for a  
**private shopping spree**

### JBZ GIFT CARDS

• In Any Denomination •  
Available at Gift Shop



**THE PERFECT GIFT  
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

## JOHN BALL ZOO MEMBERSHIP

**It's an affordable gift for  
family and friends to enjoy  
all year round**

Giving the gift of Membership is  
easy and fast... just go online to:  
[jbzoo.org](http://jbzoo.org)  
or call 616-336-4312

## Animals!



## Animals!

### Holiday RED PANDA Sponsorship \$50\*

This special gift package includes:

- Red Panda Plush (includes JBZ sweater and hat)
- free ice cream
- certificate
- fact sheet and photo
- recognition on sign inside the Zoo

Your gift is essential to our conservation efforts.  
Animals! Animals! supports animals at John Ball Zoo  
as well as wild animals around the world.

Sponsor the Red Panda this holiday season by  
visiting [jbzoo.org](http://jbzoo.org) or calling 616-336-3309.



*\*Other sponsorship levels available with a variety of Zoo benefits!*

# CHRISTMAS for the ANIMALS

## A Very Merry Holiday Celebration

Whether it's a tiger with a Christmas package - or the bears ripping into a bag of biscuits - everybody has a great time at Christmas for the Animals! Kids can make enrichment items for the animals, chat with a zookeeper and - as always - visit with Santa or scratch a reindeer behind the ears.

**Saturday, December 2 - 10 am to 3 pm**



Photo: Lynsey Marcellus



### We're Trying Something Different

Christmas for the Animals is always a free admission event. In past years we asked you to donate food items for the animals and you were extremely generous. This year, however, we're asking for your help in other ways:

- Make a gift via cash, check or credit card either at the Zoo or online at [www.jbzoo.org](http://www.jbzoo.org). All gifts will be used to purchase enrichment items for the animal as they are needed throughout the year.
- Go to John Ball Zoo's wish list via [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). Choose an enrichment item and send this special item our way for the animals.

And don't forget, please encourage your children to make a festive card for their favorite animal and bring it to the event!



**December 2 will be our last open day this season. We look forward to seeing you when we re-open March 10, 2018.**





**JOHN BALL ZOO**

1300 W Fulton St.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Permit No. 457



Photo: Earl Stringer

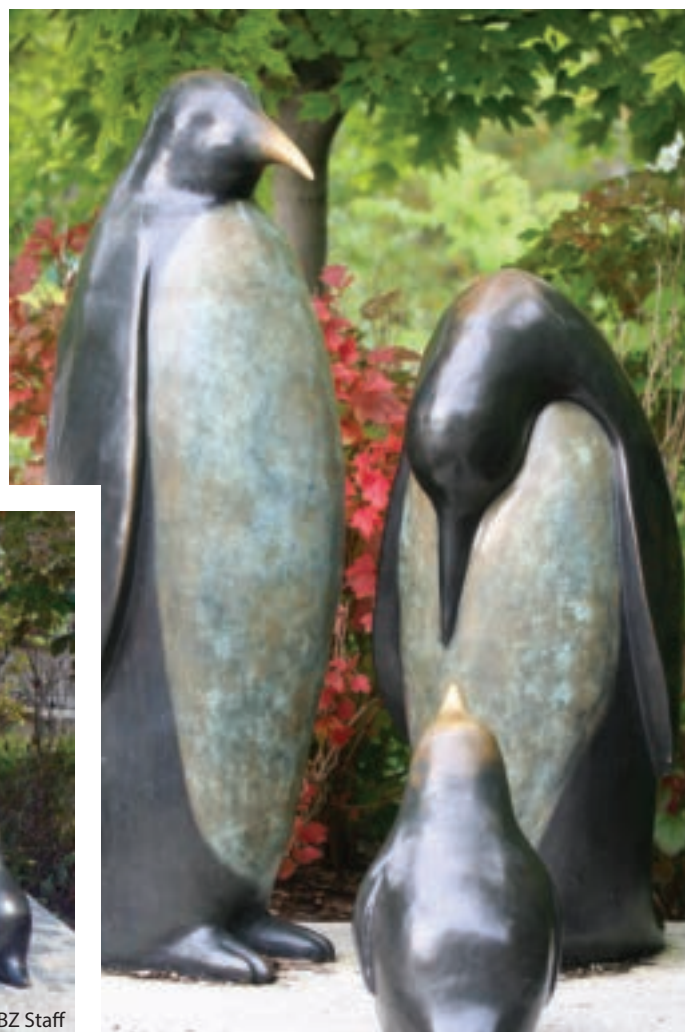


Photo: JBZ Staff

Thank you for your support of  
John Ball Zoo.