

August 2005

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THE ZOO REVIEW



Little Ray's Reptile Zoo

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**FALL/WINTER
HOURS OF OPERATION
FRIDAY, SATURDAY &
SUNDAY
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Beginning September 6th**

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.raysreptiles.com

What's inside:

Goodbye Hamlet

Snail mail no more

Dis huh?

and then some

Scary Sheri's Message

As you know, Little Ray is a busy guy, and August has been no exception. So, I (Scary Sheri) will be writing this month's newsletter address. Don't worry you'll have him back next month.

It has certainly been a hot summer, and I can't believe it's almost over. Soon we will be cursing the snow and wishing we were back in this heat wave. The high temperatures and humidity have definitely made for a happy group of reptiles here at the zoo. They have been very active, enjoying each other's company (when no one is looking of course).

Our baby African Rock Pythons started hatching out a little over a week ago, with a couple remaining in their eggs. We have just over 30 babies so far and even for a big baby snake, they are adorable. They will be staying with us for the next month before heading off to new homes, so make sure you come out to see them. Our baby California Kingsnakes & Pueblan Milksnakes also hatched out recently, as did an unexpected clutch of baby Neotropical Rattlesnakes (just what everyone needs). Again, even though we are talking about one of the top two most venomous animals here at the zoo, they are "itty bitty" and very cute. They will remain on display until the middle of September.

Also new to our family, is our young male Peregrine Falcon, Gonzales. Little Ray and Sylvain are working with him daily, and he is close to completing his training. You can see him along with our other beautiful birds in our Bird of Prey show held daily at 11:30 a.m. & 2:30 p.m. These shows will run until September 5th.

We have some staff that will be leaving the zoo over the next couple of weeks, as they are off to college/university. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work over the years. Jason "BeetleJay" is moving to Toronto to attend Seneca College, "Shaggy Shane" is off to Peterborough to attend Trent University, and "Komodo Kenzie" (Mackenzie) is moving to Kingston to attend St. Lawrence College. We wish you all the best, and will miss you.

Your friendly neighbourhood other zookeeper,

Scary Sheri

Around the zoo...

We have had an excellent summer and are hopeful that you had the opportunity to come and visit us. Please note that the **Zoo's Fall/Winter hours of operation begin as of Tuesday, September 6th**. **The zoo will be open to the public every Friday, Saturday & Sunday, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** at which time both the staff and animals will be waiting to dazzle you.

The outdoor pens are still being filled with animals on a daily basis and will continue to do so until...you guessed it – September 6th.

As mentioned in Sheri's address, the daily Birds of Prey Show will end on September 5th. Make sure to catch Sylvain or Little Ray's informative bilingual lecture before it becomes only a memory. As for the barn owls who had faces only a mom could love – they are now spectacularly beautiful and are part of the show and nature trail. All of our birds will remain on display throughout the fall. Once they are brought inside for the winter, indoor feeding demonstrations will be held every weekend.

The skunks, Bella and Q-tip are settling into their new display. Anyone concerned about sporting eau de skunk need not worry because both gals have been descented – they are sort of like two pepes qui na pas du pu.

As mentioned, some of our zoo staff will be leaving us and heading off to school. They grow up so fast don't they? Good luck to Mackenzie(the birthday party hostess/camp staff), Shane(the croc hunter who DID grow taller while in Australia), and Jason(the plant/bug expert).

In Memorandum – Hamlet Coulet

On August 4th, Hamlet, our 4 year old Vietnamese Pot Bellied Pig passed away while in surgery. Dr. Darren Auger, at Blair Animal Hospital, did all he could for our "little guy", but Hamlet was in rough shape. Dr. Auger believes his symptoms were a result of Lymphoma. Thanks for all your help Darren☺

As many of you know, Hammy was a big part of our family. He came to the zoo 4 years ago, when he really was a "little guy." He was a huge hit from the moment he entered the zoo, and spent his first summer here with the children in our summer camp. The kids would walk in the front door, and immediately ask "where's Hammy?" Everywhere you look in the zoo, there are giant snakes and alligators, but the children were mesmerized by our little pot bellied pig.

Hammy could be the most stubborn animal, and yet was incredibly gentle, affectionate, and loaded with personality. In 2003, during our renovations, he moved in with Little Ray & myself for a little more than a year. He fit in no problem and quickly became the head of the household (bossing around our two dogs & two cats). When he finally came back to the zoo, it was evident he preferred certain zookeepers over others (those who fed him as opposed to those who didn't), and that he was definitely "my" pig.

In March of this year, he moved into his permanent outdoor pen, where he could root around, and sleep in the grass and sunshine.

His death is a great loss to everyone here at the zoo, and I for one will miss him. **Scary Sheri**



◀ Here is Hamlet enjoying one of his favorite pastimes at the zoo - a nap in his pen.
Hakuna matata Hamlet.

REMINDER FOR YOUR HUNGRY PETS

The zoo sells cricket, mealworms and small rodents...for your pets. You won't find these treats in the frozen food section of the South Keys Loblaw's, so remember to pick some up at the zoo before leaving.



Calling all Linguists

There is an ongoing 'discussion' at the zoo between two certain zookeepers that remains unresolved. (Actually, each will tell you the other one is wrong.)

So, we are throwing the question out to all you wise readers. Can anyone help us define the words 'dislocate' and 'disarticulate'? Are their meanings the same or different?

We need help to figure out the true/right/proper/correct answer/response/definition/meaning of these two words!

Phatt Matt and Komodo Kenzie (well, her legs that is) with the kids of summer zoo camp. If you look closely you will see that Matt is holding an alligator – either Stuart or Chase. Our camps are the coolest!

Important notice to parents and caregivers

Finding the last two weeks of summer a tad long? There are two sessions of zoo camp left and the staff is still as cheerful and great as they were during the first week of camp. Call 822-8924 for details.

It's a frog eat frog world out there

Last month we printed a picture of what looked like two frogs playing leapfrog. Well, it was actually a leopard frog trying to 'take down' a green frog for lunch. Mangrove Mike snapped the picture while stunned Shannon stood by and did nothing. The things one sees at Petrie Island...

THE CORNER BELONGING TO KIDS...

The theme is sentences

This month's question...

On the last page of this month's newsletter there is a reported story about a snake who was hanging out in someone's mailbox. In this article an incorrect term was used to describe the snake. See if you can find the mistake and figure out what word or words should have been used.

Now, take a look at these sentences...

#1 Boy, the five lizards are jumping extra quickly, wow!

#2 Quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dogs.

Can find something neat about both of them? Hint: recite the alphabet song a few times.

Answer to last month's question...

When in the wild, do birds of prey spend most of their time sitting on perches or flying around?

Birds of prey, such as many species of hawks, will spend more time sitting on perches in the wild than they will flying. This is an effective method employed by these birds when hunting for food. The hawk will often remain still, on a perch in a tree, patiently waiting for the opportunity to pounce on an unsuspecting small animal. By sitting instead of flying, the bird preserves much needed energy. It is also more difficult to hunt effectively while you are in flight. You have to be fast, precise and have excellent vision. Staying still and quiet will often yield better results in the bird of prey's search for food. Basically, it's survival of the perchiest!

LASTLY KIDS... since you are desperately trying to enjoy your last few weeks of summer before heading back to school, I won't stress anyone out with corny jokes. Just wait until next month though...

HERPS IN THE NEWS – Literally!

Ala. Woman Finds Snake in Post Office Box

The Associated Press_Wednesday, August 10, 2005; 12:41 AM

DOTHAN, Ala. -- A typical early morning trip to the post office turned into a frightening experience for a Dothan ENT employee when she found a live corn snake hiding under the mail.

The non-poisonous snake, measuring between two and three feet long, slithered into the business post office box that Jean White regularly checks, sending her screaming hysterically for help.

"I reached in there and got some mail, and when I reached back in, I saw it under my mail. I saw its tongue," White said. "I screamed and I hollered and I screamed and hollered some more. Then I started hollering 'snake!'"

She said it took a few minutes for employees to figure out who would remove the snake from the post office box.

After removing the snake, employees called Dothan Animal Control, which disposed of it.

"In my 33 years working with the postal service, I thought I had seen just about everything, but I've never seen or heard of anything like this happening before," postal employee Steve Simmons said.

He said he did not know how the snake got into the post office box but speculated that it came from outside, seeking a warm, dry place.

He said he does not believe it was a prank.

(Somehow the term 'snail mail' no longer seems appropriate!)

