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HOBBES
1992-2007
Welcome from President - Jeanne Hall

My name is Jeanne Hall, I am the President of Phoenix Exotic and would like to briefly you on what to expect in our monthly newsletters. The newsletter is for our members who do not have convenient access to our website. We want to reach out and make Phoenix Exotic accessible, including in our newsletter information from our e-list for members who are currently not online. Enjoy!

The stated purpose of Phoenix per the articles of incorporation:

“…for charitable educational and scientific purposes; to educate the public in the necessary safety precautions and procedures for dealing with exotic wildlife; and to provide emergency assistance to exotic wildlife in need of care or relocation.”

“Phoenix Exotic Wildlife Association, Inc. is based in the UNITED STATES of AMERICA and addresses concerns within the USA and internationally. Phoenix Exotic Wildlife Association is incorporated in the state of Washington as a non-profit corporation.”

“Phoenix is dedicated to the legal and ethical ownership of exotic animals by private persons with an emphasis on education and safety. Phoenix Exotic Wildlife Association Inc. is an organization of active members working to protect and maintain the

Phoenix Exotics E-List contained many posts in March. We are limited in the print medium to select only a few items. You can join the e-list at http://phoenixexotics.org/ then click on the link for E-groups email list. Please note: Please visit the archive section of the Yahoo E-list for many more articles, posts and replies.

Letter From Editor - Rhonda Kiker

This newsletter is a derivative of the articles and posts from the Phoenix Exotic Wildlife Association, Inc. E-List, (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Phoenix_Exotics/) Many thanks to the members for their contributions. Any published submissions have been granted prior permission for publication. Should you feel that your views have not been properly represented, please email, General@PhoenixExotics.Org or President@PhoenixExotics.Org, or you may write a letter to the address below. Please be descriptive as to which article and please reference “Volume Number” and “Issue Number”, located on the front of the newsletter. If you wish to see any of our past copies of the newsletters, you may go to website, http://www.PhoenixExotics.org/

Our thanks goes to the “Associated Press” for granting a non-exclusive license to reprint materials online for the purpose of this newsletter. Phoenix Exotic Wildlife Association, Inc., membership fee is only $10.00/annually. A check or money order can be mailed along with any inquiries you may have.

Membership & Membership Renewal Form

Name(s)________________________________________ Phone_________________________ Dues ________ x $10 __________
Mailing Address________________________________________ Total enclosed: __________
E-Mail Address________________________________________
I would like to join and support the Phoenix Wildlife Association. I understand that dues are for membership only and non-refundable.
Signature_________________________ Second Signature_________________________
NOW AVAILABLE ON AMAZON!!!!

Now available online at http://www.Amazon.com with a beautiful glossy, color soft cover!

Phoenix Exotics is proud to present the second in a series of books on Responsible Ownership of Exotic Animals. This book is 144 pages long with photos and illustrations. Presenting real life tales of Monkeys and their dedicated owners, heartwarming, yet unafraid to inform prospective owners about the potential for hard times, as well as good, in such deeply held relationships.

Real life owners with real Monkeys in their families, including published authors, Board members, politicians, medical and mental health professionals and owners who have been involved with Monkeys for many years, have created a must read. Now, in their own words, exotic owners speak out.

This book gives them voice:

**LISTEN!**

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**2006 Phoenix Exotic Annual Meeting DVD and/or VHS**

I would like to announce that the long awaited DVD master copy has arrived of the 2006 Phoenix Exotic Annual Meeting that was held in Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting is available in DVD or VHS format. This has turned out terrific and is 9 hours long! The DVD and VHS case is beautifully done with the Phoenix Exotic Logo, the theme of the meeting is "SOLUTIONS" and where the meeting was held, nicely done!! A "Wanna get this" for sure!! For all those that want to order a DVD (2 discs) or VHS (2 tapes for better quality) we have tried to keep the cost to a minimal and as close to cost as possible. We are only sending in orders of 10 or more at a time in order to help keep the cost down.

To order:

- **DVDs:** $19.95 + $4.95 for shipping and handling
- **VHS:** $25.95 + $4.95 shipping and handling

(chekc or money order)

Payment can be made to:

- Phoenix Exotic Wildlife Association
- P O Box 1132
- Chehalis, WA 98532

OR

http://www.paypal.com

payable to President@PhoenixExotics.org

*note: please add $2.00 extra if ordering through paypal for paypal fees.

Please include:

- Name and address
- Number of copies
- Amount sent
- e-mail address or telephone number in the event we need to get in touch with you.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at cathspohrer@metrocast.net

Cathy Freeman-Spohrer
Secretary, Phoenix Exotics
Celebrating the life of Hobbs the liger
By Tim Stoffel

Back in August of 1992, a tiger somewhere in Indiana had unexpected cubs. She had been living with a lion, and one or both of them were supposed to have been neutered. Apparently not, as the cubs born to this tigress were ligers, a cross between a male lion and a female tiger. There were five cubs total, with one of them being smaller than the others. While there was some interest in the four bigger ligers, there was not much interest in the runt. The owner of this facility had another friend at a new zoo that had just been started in Reno, Nevada. He offered them this unique cub, and told them to take a whirl at trying to raise it.

This special cub did thrive in his new environment, and quickly drew lots of attention both inside and outside the zoo. They named this little (but rapidly growing) liger 'Hobbs' after the tiger in the comic strip, 'Calvin and Hobbes'. Hobbs was a pleasure to work with, and very well-behaved for a big cat. And Hobbs helped put Sierra Safari Zoo 'on the map'.

Hobbs shared the only big cat enclosure in the zoo with a lion named Claude. The zoo was rapidly growing at this time, and a large grant allowed the acquisition of several other big cats (and a new enclosure system, which is the present-day big cat area). One of these cats was a tiger named Tasha. Although Tasha actually grew up with Kenya the lion, they paired her with Hobbs. The two lived together for nearly nine years, and were best friends.

Hobbs was enormous. In the years I was working with him, he weighed about 900 pounds. This is about double any other cat we had in the zoo, including our magnificent male lion, Kenya. Big cats concentrate a lot of weight in small areas. So Hobbs had trouble walking on ice, but that didn't stop him. I remember Hobbs ‘plowing’ through the ice in our pond on more than one occasion. At least Hobbs liked water, and even though it was a bit cold, never hesitated to 'go swimming' if there was an important need (like retrieving an interesting object from the middle of the pond.

And speaking of water, in summer, Hobbs would try to 'hide' in the water so he could surprise you and get you all wet. The look on his face when he was in the water was, 'What cat? No, there's no 1,000 pound cat hiding in this water!' Both keepers and visitors were recipients of these 'baths'.

Because Hobbs was so large, they had a contest to have people guess how much he actually weighed. So, for his birthday that year, they were going to take him to a truck scale and have him weighed. The catkeepers tried to get Hobbs to get into their animal transport trailer. But ligers are cats after all, and he refused to cooperate. End of promotion!

Hobbs was as much as he could be, gentle with the other cats, of which he had frequent contact. Lori Acordigotia, the zoo's manager, has a wonderful story about this, when she introduced a lion cub named Jambo to the adult big cats. I will let her tell it in her own words: "...Even the other cats had great respect for him and not from fear but from friendship. He showed kindness to them all often rubbing up against the fence next to them and greeting them happily. A great example of this was the first time I took our lion cub Jambo to meet Hobbs; Hobbs was so excited coming quickly to the fence and chuffing eagerly. Jambo was not prepared for this gentle giant and was startled and ran off. The next time I took Jambo to see Hobbs, Hobbs came over slowly and close to the ground chuffing in a gentle quiet way I had never heard before. This time Jambo was not intimidated and they became instant friends rubbing and licking each other. I found out then just how special he really was. ..."

Indeed, Jambo has lived next door to Hobbs for most of his life, and they have always been great friends.

Hobbs liked everyone, and was well-behaved. Zoo manager Jimmy Martin described Hobbs as a 'very wise cat'. But one day, Hobbs noticed a new keeper that had joined the Sunday zoo crew. He liked this new keeper, who was tall, with silver hair (Kelly). Soon, Kelly found he had a huge new playmate who wanted him to be with him all the time. Hobbs had 'adopted' him!

Hobbs was not once, but twice photographed for
publication in various National Geographic publications. The one published in May of 2006 in National Geographic Kids magazine shows a full side profile of this huge and magnificent cat. The movie ‘Napoleon Dynamite’ made ligers famous overnight. For weeks after the movie came out on video, the zoo was getting lots of calls asking if ligers really existed. Of course, we were able to confirm that firsthand! Hobbs narrowly missed being on ‘Good Morning America’ at that time, the honor going to Doctor Bhagavan Antle’s liger ‘Hercules’.

In early 2002, another new cat-oriented keeper started working at Sierra Safari Zoo. That was me. Kenya the great black-maned lion was the first to ‘adopt’ me. I think he saw ‘lion man’ written all over me! But Hobbs for once ignored Kelly and started paying attention to me. Kelly didn’t mind, as this gave him a chance to play with Tasha tiger. As the spring of that year turned into summer, Hobbs’ unusual interest in me became readily apparent. He would follow me around wherever I went. He would invent games with me. He went out of his way to get me wet whenever he could via the aforementioned ‘liger in the water’ game. Despite his immense size, he was a very quiet stalker, and would occasionally ‘surprise’ me.

All male cats can spray their scent-marked urine backwards to mark various objects. Hobbs liked to spray-mark people. He marked both zookeepers, and much to their annoyance, visitors! He made a big game out of it. Most visitors did not care much for this behavior. But one day, a boy and his father came into the gift shop while I was working there. The boy was grinning from ear to ear. Hobbs had sprayed him, and he was thrilled to be ‘property of a liger’! Eventually, we had to post a sign in his area, warning visitors about his penchant for spraying.

There was another humorous spraying incident involving Hobbs. One day, I had just let Kenya into the run. He slowly made his way over to the common fence between Hobbs and the run. Hobbs was waiting for him. Both cats then turned around, lifted their tails, and proceeded to repeatedly spray each other-- a proverbial ‘pissing match’!

Initially, Hobbs made every attempt to spray me. But he eventually stopped doing this because I think he knew that I knew he owned me. Instead, I was able to start training him to spray on command!

I have had the pleasure of working with Hobbs through all sorts of adventures and misadventures. We were always ‘best friends’, and looked forward to seeing each other. As Hobbs got more comfortable with me, he would ‘purr’ for me. Big cats aren’t supposed to be able to purr, but Hobbs could, after a fashion. Hobbs rarely purred for anyone except me. When Hobbs figured out that I was going to stay down by him, he would roll on his back and look goofy. This was Hobbs at his most very relaxed. I have lots of pictures of him doing this.

In late 2002, we had a terrible windstorm in the Reno area. The zoo is in one of the windiest areas of Reno. I remember working at the zoo that day. We saw an emu almost fly. A tractor-trailer overturned in front of the zoo. I watched the shingles blowing off the roof of my house, as all the neighbor’s horses ran through my yard. (I live next door to the zoo.) We struggled to do any zoo chores that day at all. I finally went home, hoping and praying I would still have power. I happened to look out the window that overlooks the zoo, and saw an amazing sight. Hobbs and Tasha were out in the exercise run. (not in their cozy house!) Hobbs was laying on his back, slowly opening and closing his big mouth. He must have really enjoyed how that stiff wind was blowing on his body! There was just enough light left that I was able to get a picture of him doing this.

Kelly, Hobbs’ other ‘adopted keeper’, also had Hobbs trained to jump up against the fence to his full height-- nearly 12 feet! A time came when we needed to measure how tall he was when he did this. But just the weigh-in many years before, he stubbornly refused to cooperate, especially if anyone had their camera at the ready!

In the last year or so, Hobbs started to slow down a bit. He would still play and stalk, and act goofy. He just didn't do it as much. He also seemed to be a bit more protective of Tasha than he had in previous years. Hobbs was getting old. The nominal lifespan for a liger is 15 years. Hobbs had just turned 14.

Being so big, Hobbs had an enormous appetite. He got 14 pounds of hamburger-like meat a day. But, he could easily eat 50 or 60 pounds at a sitting. When in his finest form, he could eat his 14 pounds of food in about a minute and a half.

Hobbs had incredibly deep feelings and emotions for the people he loved. He could read your feelings and act accordingly. To back this up, one day, Hobbs was somehow sad about the way he thought he had acted (continued on page 6)
towards me the day before, and came up to greet me, crying. This was really touching, and a behavior I have only seen once in any other cat.

In early January of 2007, I observed from my home, a most amazing sight. Kenya and Hobbs were sleeping together, snuggled up along the fence between Kenya's enclosure and the run. Normally, these two cats kept their distance from each other because they were both intact males (although Hobbs was naturally sterile). This was not a one-time occurrence. I saw them do this a number of times over the next few weeks. I somehow think Hobbs was being friends with Kenya because he knew something we didn't.

It was just a few weeks later that Hobbs started to not feel well. I started to spend extra time with him, and I am glad I did. He had liver problems, and it took him quickly.

At about 10:30 on Friday, February 23rd, I got the call from the zoo. The zoo manager, Lori was bawling. Hobbs was dying. I dropped what I was doing and rushed to the zoo, because I knew that Hobbs needed his best friend to be there in his time of need. At 7:50 PM that evening, my big friend Hobbs breathed his last breath with me by his side. It was a terrible experience to have to watch such a magnificent creature die. But, it was also a strangely thrilling experience to have helped my big friend make that very scary step into the next life. Hobbs knew he was loved, and that his friend was by him to help as only a friend can at these times.

But, a big cat like Hobbs has a big spirit as well. Before that sad night was over, I felt a large presence giving me a 'big cat rub' in my spirit. Over the course of the next several days, Hobbs has 'visited' frequently. Sometimes, it seems like there is a liger loose in the house! But that is OK. I love Hobbs and Hobbs loves me. Hobbs told me that I 'done well for him' on that terrible day. He told me to think pleasant thoughts about him, which I am trying to do more and more as my grief abates. Then, two mornings ago, I was awakened by a gentle 'big cat rub'. Hobbs was calming me, as I had experienced a nightmare just a little while before. He then taught me how to purr like he did when he was alive. I have since starting purring like a liger whenever I need to relax or calm myself. Or, if I am just feeling good. (It drives my domestic cats nuts, though!) Hobbs has also reminded me that no matter what, we will always have each other. And then one day when the Great Lion calls me home, we will be together forever!

Tim Stoffel
3-5-2007

AN ODE TO HOBBS

Hobbs, you were the best big friend a person could ever hope to have. We played with each other, played tricks on each other, and spent many happy hours just enjoying each others' presence. Having you choose me to be your friend is a privilege that could not be bought for all the riches of this world. Although I will miss your enthusiastic greeting in the morning, and your roaring at night, I know you are with me in spirit. Our separation will be but a brief one in the scheme of things. Before we know it, we will be together again forever!

Washoe County allows bobcat as pet
Submitted by (south zoo) Thu Feb 27, 2007

RENO, Nev. An 18-pound bobcat is now officially a pet in Antelope Valley.

The county Animal Control Board ordered the bobcat named Katrina spayed and issued an exotic pet permit last week.

Animal Control Supervisor Mitch Schneider says the cat has been raised as a pet since it was five weeks old. It's now a little more than a year and a half old.

He adds that it's living in an area where people own more than 100 acres.

Along with the bobcat, Schneider says active permits are in effect for two Bengal tigers in Palomino Valley, two pythons in the Lemmon Valley area, a monkey at Pyramid Lake and a lynx cat in Incline Village.
An Example Of Private Property
Submitted by (rrooney) Mon Mar 5, 2007

Many times over the years people have compared exotics to cars and I have repeatedly pointed out that law regarding usage of autos apply mostly on public property. e.g. "roads". Here is a real-life example.

Oregon community reins in its police for minor infractions - The Associated Press


Sgt. P.J. Beaty watches people in this upscale development breaking traffic laws, and sees plenty of them. But he can't pull them over. A man swerved head-on into Beaty's lane, and then back out again and Beaty couldn't lay a glove on him.

For years, he and the department's 10 other sworn officers could have pulled him over.

But the Sunriver Service District, which governs police and fire departments, voted in February to tell officers to make Sunriver's roads, which are private but open to the public, exempt from minor vehicle infractions.

So residents and the public alike can run a stop sign at will in the 5-square-mile area that makes up Sunriver.

Police there can only stop drivers for what the state calls traffic crimes, such as drunken or reckless driving.

The Sunriver police are the main patrol presence in the area. Radar units have been removed from their cars.

Sunriver Police Chief Mike Kennedy referred all questions to Sunriver District Chairman Doug Seator, who said the directives reflect the will of the Sunriver Owners Association that serves as a sort of government for the community south of Bend.

The unincorporated community has about 2,000 full-time residents, many more when its vacation homes are occupied.

Seator said the association, which owns the roads, told the district that its roads are private, but open to the public.

That means police have limited power in what they can enforce, much like in a supermarket parking lot, Oregon State Police Lt. Carl Rhodes said.

But Bill Chapman, the association's general manager, said the owners' association had nothing to do with it.

"This was a unilateral decision by the board," he said.

In Black Butte Ranch, another private homeowners community, police can still pull people over for basic violations, said Chief Gil Zaccaro.

His six officers treat violations like speeding as a "ranch citation" that do not appear on a person's record.

Sunriver's policy has Zaccaro worried about safety.

Suppose, he says, a drunken driver runs a stop sign or drives on the wrong side of the road?

"You really have no probable cause," Zaccaro said. "If those tools are not available, you lose that stop. You can't make that stop. Therefore, potentially drunk drivers could really be getting away."

"Not a lot of people know," Beaty said of Sunriver's policy. "The word hasn't gotten out yet."

Deon Stonehouse, a resident since 2005, said she had not heard about the issue, but was concerned.

"You want the streets to be safe," Stonehouse said. "You want them to be able to enforce."
Highlighted In This Issue:

- Celebrating the life of Hobbs the liger
- Washoe County allows bobcat as pet
- An Example of Private Property

Coming up in next issue....Phoenix Exotics 2007 Annual Meeting Review!

TO: