An Alligator Snapping Turtle from Predators of the Heart!
Welcome from the President

My name is Jeanne Hall. I am the President of Phoenix Exotic. Our monthly newsletters are provided essentially for our members who may not have access to our website in an effort to keep our membership well-informed regarding organizational business and abreast of current legislation regarding private ownership.

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.”

In our monthly newsletters, you will also find information regarding husbandry, upcoming meetings, rescue, cage design, safety and much more.

If you wish to see any of our past copies of the newsletters, you may go to website, http://www.PhoenixExotics.org/. You can join the e-list at http://phoenixexotics.org/ and then click on the link for E-groups email list. ENJOY!

-Rhonda Kiker

Letter From Editor

Our monthly newsletter is a compilation of articles and posts from the Phoenix Exotic Wildlife Association, Inc. E-List. We are limited in the print medium to select only a few items.

Any published submissions have been granted prior permission for publication.

Our thanks goes to the Associated Press for granting a non-exclusive license to reprint materials online for the purpose of this newsletter.

We encourage member participation by submitting stories and photos of your animals to us with your expressed written permission to use the material for the newsletters and website. If you wish to remain anonymous, just express it with your consent. Thank you!

-Rhonda Kiker

Membership & Membership Renewal Form

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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at southzoo@aol.com
Rhonda Kiker
Animal rights activists say they set Reno fire
Submitted by (south zoo) Fri Jun 5, 2009

By Scott Sonner - AP Writer

Reno, NV (AP) - Animal rights activists have claimed responsibility for a fire that gutted the Reno business office of a company that ships monkeys from China for scientific research in the United States and elsewhere.

Reno police and fire officials began investigating the arson claim by the Animal Liberation Front after The Associated Press sought comment about an e-mail the group circulated to media outlets and posted on a Web site. "At this point we are looking at it as a lead," Reno police spokesman Steve Frady said Wednesday. "There is evidence of arson. At this point there is no physical evidence to link this with the group claiming responsibility," he said.

No one was injured in the fire that broke out about 4 a.m. on May 18 and caused an estimated $300,000 damage to offices of Scientific Resources International Inc. just southwest of downtown Reno, Frady said.

The North American Animal Liberation Front Press Office, which posts messages from groups taking credit for animal rights violence, said on its Web site Tuesday that it received an "anonymous communique" last week indicating ALF was claiming responsibility for the fire.

"In the early morning hours of May 18th, four incendiary devices were planted at Scientific Resources International, a supplier of non-humyn (sic) primates for use in vivisection labs all over northern Nevada," the message read. "The concept of animals existing as `resources' is utterly despicable, and we vow to do all in our power to run businesses like these into the ground."

Vivisection labs are used by scientists who experiment with animals, such as for medical research.

Frady said the building is listed as a business office and didn't believe any animals had been housed there.

A man who answered the telephone listing for the office said he was the manager but declined to give his name. He said the building had been destroyed and would be unable to conduct business until it was rebuilt. The one-story home that housed the offices in a largely residential district still smelled of smoke Wednesday. A sign identified it only as "SRI Inc." The most badly charred parts of the building were by two front doors on a large covered porch and in the rear of the building. Several holes have been boarded up.

"We are hoping the public has information that will help us to thoroughly investigate this case and determine who was responsible for setting this fire," Frady said. He said 33 firefighters were called to battle the blaze. Frady said he wasn't aware of any other acts of violence involving ALF in the Reno-Sparks area in recent years.

In 2007, a Canadian animal rights activist was sentenced to more than three years in prison for helping a cell of the ALF set fire to federal wild horse corrals at Litchfield, Calif., about 90 miles northwest of Reno. Darren Todd Thurston, 37, had pleaded guilty to conspiracy and arson in the 2001 fire at the U.S. Bureau of Land Management corrals.

S.F. Zoo settles suit over tiger attack
Submitted by (south zoo) Sat May 30, 2009

San Francisco, CA (AP) - The San Francisco Zoo has settled a lawsuit with two brothers who survived the tiger attack on Christmas Day 2007 that killed their friend.
The zoo issued a statement saying it was thankful the lawsuit with Kulbir and Amirtpal "Paul" Dhaliwal had been settled. The brothers survived an attack by an escaped Siberian tiger. Carlos Sousa Jr., 17, was killed. Sousa's parents also reached a settlement with the zoo.

Details of both lawsuits remain secret. The San Jose Mercury News and the San Francisco Chronicle, citing anonymous sources, report that the brothers will receive $900,000.

**CT: Turn in your lions, tigers and bears**
Submitted by (south zoo) Sat May 30, 2009

By Andrew Pergram - AP Writer

On July 25, you can drop off your mauling machine, sorry, your beloved behemoth, at the Beardsley Zoo, no questions asked.

The state does have a ban on owning certain animals as pets. Even if someone wants to turn over a dangerous pet that they legally own, the zoo and the Department of Environmental Protection are ready to receive and take care of them.

The DEP’s Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Conservation said they don’t want the animals just left out in the wild because they can have "an adverse impact on Connecticut’s native plants and animal populations, not to mention the human population.

In mid-February, a 200-pound celebrity chimp attacked and nearly killed Charla Nash outside her Stanford home.

Owning a chimpanzee is not a crime, but the state is considering expanding the list of wild animals that can not be kept as pets.

So what animals are currently on the list? Those in the felidae, canidae and ursidae species. For those without a high school biology book, that includes lions, leopards, jaguars, wolves, coyotes, black, brown and grizzly bears.

**Las Vegas Zoo lion died of cancer, vet says**
Submitted by (south zoo) Thu Jun 18, 2009

Las Vegas, (AP) - A veterinarian says cancer, not a rubber ball, killed a 10-year-old lion that died earlier this month at the Southern Nevada Zoological Botanical Park.

Exotic animal veterinarian Randy Ceballos performed the necropsy on the lion, named Midas, and says he has no doubt those cancerous tumors on the colon and elsewhere caused the fatal illness.

Midas was euthanized June 5.

At the time, zoo director Pat Dingle said be believed the lion died after eating a rubber football likely thrown into the exhibit by employees at a neighboring thrift store. The half-eaten ball was discovered in the exhibit a week before the lion fell ill.

Ceballos says he did not find a ball in the lion’s digestive track.

**Oregon woman obsessed with rabbits arrested again**
Submitted by (lion guy) Wed Jun 17, 2009

Tigard, OR (AP) - Authorities said a woman obsessed with rabbits is in trouble again: In violation of probation terms, she was found holed up in a hotel room with more than a dozen rabbits. Officers said they had to break into the room Tuesday and found eight adults and half a dozen baby rabbits, one dead. The police say some were caged, some were roaming.

They arrested 47-year-old Miriam Sakewitz. She was arrested in 2007 with more than 250 rabbits in squalid conditions. In a plea deal, she was forbidden to have animals for five years.

Before her conviction, police said, she broke into a holding area to retrieve her rabbits. Four months after the plea deal, she was sent to jail for three days for having a rabbit.
Alaska cracks down on man who feeds wild grizzlies

Submitted by (south zoo) Fri Jun 5, 2009
Mary Pemberton, AP Writer
Anchorage, AK (AP) - Charlie Vandergaw is crazy about bears.

That’s obvious in a documentary made last year by a British filmmaker at Vandergaw’s remote Alaska cabin and featured in the recent Animal Planet TV series “Stranger Among Bears.” The videos show him scratching the belly of one black bear as if it was the family dog, feeding a cookie to a large black bear sitting under a tree, and feeding dog kibble to a cub from his outstretched hand.

Vandergaw has been coexisting with bears this way for the last 20 years, and he wants to be left alone.

That is not likely to happen now that the state is using a beefed-up law to prosecute Vandergaw for feeding bears. Game officials consider feeding bears a danger to humans, especially if others duplicate the behavior.

Not everyone thinks the state needs to be going after a 70-year-old retired teacher and wrestling coach.

Even if Vandergaw ends up being killed by the bears he loves, that’s the Alaska way, said John Frost, who has been friends with Vandergaw for years. He recalled that when he came to Alaska in 1973 he saw a T-shirt that said “Alaska: land of the individual and other endangered species.“

“Yet here we are as a state going to crush this kind, gentle little guy,” Frost said.

The bears at Vandergaw’s cabin about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northwest of Anchorage are more than bold, said Sean Farley, a research biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, who helped troopers serve a search warrant on Farley’s cabin last year.

During the search, bears had been scared off with “cracker shots” that make a loud noise when fired.

If bears were that bold in an Anchorage park or campground, Farley said, he would recommend they be shot right away.

He also noted what happened to filmmaker Richard Terry at Vandergaw’s cabin: “He got whacked and dragged across the yard by one of the bears during filming. Charlie has been nipped and slapped around.“

The state last week charged Vandergaw with 20 counts of illegally feeding game — a charge that could put him in jail for a year and fine him $10,000.

The law was recently changed to include stiffer fines and jail time, and Frost says it was specifically changed to go after his friend, Vandergaw. Farley denies that Vandergaw was the motivation behind the stiffer penalties.

There was no comment from Vandergaw. No one answered the door at his Anchorage home Wednesday and he has not responded to messages. The state has seized the plane that
he normally would use to reach the cabin, Bear Haven, which is not accessible by road. According to charging documents, the plane was used to transport dog food to the cabin.

Vandergaw's lawyer, Kevin T. Fitzgerald, said in a statement that he found the state charges “curious as to both timing and substance.” He said Vandergaw stopped feeding bears last year.

The documentary describes how Vandergaw once hunted bears but quit after an encounter with a bear 20 years ago, shortly after he retired in 1985. A black bear appeared on his yard and crawled up to him on its belly. According to the Animal Planet Web site, Vandergaw reciprocated, and the encounter started “a long-lasting love affair” with bears.

Farley said there is a psychological component to Vandergaw’s behavior with the bears. “They are associating with Charlie only because of the food. That association is fulfilling some psychological need for Charlie,” he said.

Many Alaskans think Vandergaw is just plain crazy and lucky not to be “Treadwelled,” a term used by some unsympathetic Alaskans referring to Timothy Treadwell, a self-described “bear protector” who had a similarly chummy relationship with bears. He and his girlfriend were eaten by grizzlies in Katmai National Park in 2003.

On one of the videos, Vandergaw says: “I think basically what I do is my business as long as I’m not hurting anyone.“

But Farley said Vandergaw was profiting from Bear Haven and had drawn two friends into his enterprise. They also were charged.

According to charging documents, Firecracker Films in London paid Vandergaw and co-defendant Carla Garrod nearly $79,000. “Charlie hasn’t just been quietly feeding them. He has been profiting from it,” Farley said.

Charging documents say a search of the home of Garrod — a real estate appraiser who also owns a photo business called C&C Bear Imagery — found receipts for thousands of pounds of dog food and hundreds of pounds of cookies.

Also charged was another Vandergaw friend, Terry Cartee. Documents say Cartee delivered 2,800 pounds (1,270 kilograms) of dog food to Vandergaw.

“It is unfortunate that the state of Alaska has taken this action now after turning a blind eye toward Mr. Vandergaw and his activities in the Susitna River valley for many years,” Brent Cole, Garrod’s lawyer, said in a statement. “This is an unfortunate occurrence which should make all citizens of Alaska pause and contemplate the unbridled power of the state of Alaska.“
Highlighted In This Issue:

- Animal rights activists say they set Reno fire
- S.F. Zoo settles suit over tiger attack
- Alaska cracks down on man who feeds grizzlies

DONATIONS NEEDED!
Due to economic hardship, Phoenix Exotics is asking its members for an additional donation for 2009. In the past, Phoenix has offered its services for low membership fees. Donations are now needed in order to cover postage, printing and general operation costs. Any donated amount will be greatly appreciated and will enable us to continue our services. Thank you!