Zoo Weekend Special Edition

Jungle Drums
A PUBLICATION FOR THE MONTGOMERY ZOO AND MANN MUSEUM MEMBERS

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southamerica
New additions to the South American realm at Montgomery Zoo

ZOO WEEKEND
MONTGOMERY ZOO AND MANN MUSEUM
MARCH 11-12, 9am - 6pm daily

MONTGOMERY ZOO
MANN WILDLIFE LEARNING CENTER

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Spring has sprung, and I invite you and your family to enjoy the glorious, sunny days of Spring at the Zoo. Invite your friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers; and discover the wonders of the Montgomery Zoo and Mann Wildlife Learning Museum.

**Zoo Weekend** is being held Saturday and Sunday, March 11-12, 9am - 6pm daily. All Zoo/Museum memberships are discounted March 4-19 to commemorate this annual spring time event, making it the perfect time of the year to join or renew your zoo membership. A variety of memberships are available to fit your family’s needs. Join online to beat the rush, and enjoy a members’ express lane during Zoo Weekend. Or there will be plenty of MAZS board members glad to help you join during Zoo Weekend at the gates.

**WELCOME NEW MAZS board members.** Every year, we get a new group of excited and energetic people that love the community and the Zoo to join forces to help us bring new and exciting things to the Zoo. Please help me in welcoming Fred Bowman Bear, Ann Fuller, Ellis Pilgreen, Robert Mitchell Pirnie IV (Rob), Davis Snider, Helene Sabel Tucker, and La Shondra Vaughn to the MAZS board. Thank you for serving.

**NEVER TOO EARLY to save the date for Zoobilation, September 14, 2017.** Please support this event with corporate and personal sponsorships, buying tickets and attending, donating silent auction items, or providing food and beverage sponsorships. For more details, please contact me at MAZSPresident@gmail.com, or contact Zoo staff. And we look forward to seeing you at the Zoo soon!
One of the Zoo’s most important resources is its volunteer base. From individuals to groups, volunteers help the Zoo succeed. Thousands of local residents are called upon each year to serve at the zoo as volunteers and freely give countless hours of their time supporting our mission and initiatives. Young and old, as individuals and in groups, for personal satisfaction or to fulfill required service hours, volunteers often choose to serve at the zoo because of an appreciation of wildlife and a love of the outdoors. The zoo offers a unique environment where one can serve the community while gazing at 14-foot tall giraffes or listening to the trumpeting of elephants.

When many people think about volunteering, they immediately think of working one of the many events we host each year. During events such as ZooBoo, we look to fill over 1400 volunteer slots during a 12 night event. Without the help of many volunteers, events such as ZooBoo would not be continual successes year after year. However, volunteering at the zoo is much more than just filling needs during special events. We bring in volunteers weekly to help with a variety of unglamorous yet important tasks. Groups of military service members often support the zoo during their brief stays in Montgomery. These groups aid our maintenance staff in maintaining the zoo grounds by trimming shrubbery, raking leaves and mulch, and helping set up or take down Christmas light displays. The additional hands are very appreciated by our maintenance staff who have over 40 acres of grounds and buildings to maintain. Beyond event volunteers and service groups, we also are fortunate to have help from volunteers who come out weekly or even multiple times a week to help at our giraffe encounter or monitor Parakeet Cove. Docents and Zoo Teens volunteer weekly in the zoo’s Education Department feeding and caring for animals. These regular volunteers become experts on the animals with which they interact and share their knowledge with guests.

Throughout the years volunteers come and go, but many become long term zoo volunteers serving 10, 15, and even 20 or more years. Their dedication to supporting the zoo faithfully each year does not go unnoticed by zoo staff. Our long term volunteers are some of our biggest advocates in the community and without them the Montgomery Zoo would not be what it is today.

During the first few months of each year, zoo officials and the Montgomery Area Zoological Society take time to recognize...Continued on page 7...
Celebrate the coming of Spring at the 41st Annual Zoo Weekend. See the Zoo transformed into a festival-like environment filled with rides, games, great food, live entertainment and your favorite furry and feathered friends.

Zoo Weekend 2017 is scheduled for March 11-12, 9am - 6pm daily. This popular two-day festival began in 1976 as a fundraiser to help support the Montgomery Zoo. The promotion began with WHHY 102-FM and McDonald’s leading the way to bring hundreds of thousands of community supporters together at the Zoo to help enhance it through monetary contributions. By doing so, these additional funds have aided the zoo in building more animal exhibits, animal encounters, rides and attractions and education programs. Throughout Zoo Weekend’s 41 years of existence it still remains to be a major fundraiser for the zoo to further enhance the animals and their habitats.

What is Zoo Weekend? Zoo Weekend is an annual fun-filled weekend held on the zoo grounds. It is a two-day event and one of the zoo’s major fundraisers complete with entertainment, food, petting zoo, animal rides, Ronald McDonald, games, animal shows and much more. Zoo Weekend is sure to bring the kid out in everyone!

Who can come? Everyone is invited. Young, middle aged and older are welcome.

Where do I park? A shuttle will be available from the ADEM parking lot on Coliseum Blvd. Shuttles will run all day and until everyone leaves the Zoo.

How much does it cost? Tickets can be purchased at the gate the day of the event. Adults are $15 per person, children ages 3 - 12 year old are $11 per person. A special discounted admission will be offered for the Mann Museum ($3 per person) during Zoo Weekend only. Montgomery Zoo members and toddlers 2 year old and younger will be admitted FREE.

How do I purchase a ticket? Contact the zoo office by calling (334) 240-4900 to purchase advance tickets or purchase tickets online at montgomeryzoo.com.

What’s the entertainment like? Various local musical groups; including country, pop, classic rock, gospel, contemporary Christian, DJ style, rap, R&B and more. Ronald McDonald, Montgomery Police K-9 dogs, karate performances, dance performances and live animal presentations from the Zoo’s Education Department will be performing throughout the two-day event. Check out the Montgomery Zoo’s facebook page and web site at montgomeryzoo.com for a schedule of events.

What type of food can be purchased? There will be many wonderful food choices including delicacies from Southern Food Services Management. There will be hamburgers, hot dogs, pizza, sandwiches, salads, cotton candy, barbeque, ice cream, slushies, an assortment of refreshing beverages and many more food selections.

What is new? Check out the newly renovated and enhanced Overlook Cafe. Customer friendly, grab and go, fresh and smart foods, and old time favorites.

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Zoo Weekend, March 11-12, 9am-6pm

Zoo Weekend, March 11-12, 9am - 6pm
Can I bring my own food? Sure. There are picnicking areas throughout the Zoo for you to enjoy your food. However, outside food and beverages are not allowed at the Overlook Café area. That area is reserved for the strictly patrons that purchase food directly from the Overlook Café.

Will the animals be on exhibit? Yes, the animals will be on exhibit throughout the Zoo Weekend two-day event.

Will the rides and attractions be operating? Yes, all of the rides and attractions will be in full operation. This includes the train, skylift ride, giraffe encounter, parakeet cove, pedal boats, camel and pony rides, petting zoo, bouncy houses, large inflatable slides, twin spin, rock climbing wall and the playground.

What sort of things have past Zoo Weekend funds helped? Monkey Island, African Elephant Habitat, the McMonty Express, the Spectacled Bear Exhibit, the North American River Otter Habitat, the Toucan Exhibit, American Alligator, and the soon to start construction Stingray Bay exhibit.

Who are the sponsors of the event? McDonalds, WCOV FOX 20, Cumulus Broadcasting Stations (Mix 103.3, Fox 95.1, WLWI 92.3 and Y-102), Alabama News Network, Montgomery Advertiser, The City of Montgomery and the Montgomery Area Zoological Society.

When will Zoo Weekend take place? Zoo Weekend take place on Saturday, March 11 and Sunday March 12, 2017 from 9am – 6pm daily. For more info, give us a call at (334) 240-4900 or visit our web site at montgomeryzoo.com.
I am a native of South America. I live in savannahs, dense forest and near bodies of water. I am the world’s largest rodent. And our names are Gus, Belle and Jasmine. What are we?

Capybara derived from Tupi ka’apiũara, meaning “one who eats slender leaves”, or “grass-eater”. The capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) closest relatives are guinea pigs and rock cavies. It is a highly social species and can be found in groups as large as 100 individuals.

The capybara has a heavy, barrel-shaped body and short head, with reddish-brown fur on the upper part of its body that turns yellowish-brown underneath. Its sweat glands can be found in the surface of the hairy portions of its skin, an unusual trait among rodents. The animal lacks under hair, and guard hair differs little from over hair. Adult capybaras grow to 3.5 to 4.5 feet in length, stand 20 to 24 inches tall, and typically weigh 77 to 146lbs. Capybaras have slightly webbed feet and vestigial tails. Their hind legs are slightly longer than their forelegs; they have three toes on their rear feet and four toes on their front feet. Their muzzles are blunt, with nostrils, and the eyes and ears are near the top of their heads.

Capybaras are semiaquatic mammals found throughout almost all countries of South America except Chile. They live in densely forested areas near bodies of water, such as lakes, rivers, swamps, ponds, and marshes, as well as flooded savannah and along rivers in tropical forest. Capybaras are herbivores, grazing mainly on grasses and aquatic plants, as well as fruit and tree bark. Capybaras are also auto-coprophagous, meaning they eat their own feces as a source of bacterial gut flora, to help digest the cellulose in the grass that forms their normal diet, and to extract the maximum protein and vitamins from their food. As is the case with other rodents, the front teeth of capybaras grow continually to compensate for the constant wear from eating grasses: their cheek teeth also grow continuously.

They can have a lifespan of 8–10 years, but live less than four years in the wild, as they are a favorite food of jaguar, puma, ocelot, eagle, and caiman. The capybara is also the preferred prey of the anaconda.

Capybaras are gregarious (living in groups or communities). While they sometimes live solitarily, they are more commonly found in groups of around 10-20 individuals, with two to four adult males, four to seven adult females, and the remainder juveniles.

Capybaras have two types of scent glands; a morillo, located on the snout, and anal glands. Both sexes have these glands, but males have much larger morillos and use their anal glands more frequently. The anal glands of males are also lined with detachable hairs. These hairs have a longer-lasting scent mark. Capybaras scent-mark by rubbing their morillos on objects, or by walking over scrub and marking it with their anal glands. Capybaras can spread their scent further by urinating; however, females usually mark without urinating and scent-mark less frequently than males overall. Females mark more often during the wet season when they are in estrus. In addition to objects, males also scent-mark females.

Capybara gestation is 130-150 days, and produces a litter of four capybara young on average, but may produce between one and eight in a single litter. Continued on page 7...
Zoo Weekend volunteers

Love those zoo volunteers

Continued from page 3... the hard work put forth by our many volunteers. The Education Department hosted a recognition reception and banquet for Docents and Zoo Teens in January. In February, all other volunteers were honored at an appreciation brunch and treated to a day at the zoo with their families. These small tokens of gratitude are the least we can do to say thank you.

The Montgomery Zoo is always looking for new volunteers to come aboard. Volunteer opportunities are available to suit many needs, skillsets, and interest. Contact us today if you are interested in serving the zoo as a volunteer.

Capybaras

Continued from page 6... Birth is on land and the female rejoins the group within a few hours of delivering the newborn capybaras, which join the group as soon as they are mobile. Within a week, the young can eat grass, but continue to suckle—from any female in the group—until weaned around 16 weeks. The young form a group within the main group. Alloparenting has been observed in this species. Breeding peaks between April and May in Venezuela and between October and November in Mato Grosso, Brazil.

Though quite agile on land (capable of running as fast as a horse), capybaras are equally at home in the water. They are excellent swimmers, and can remain completely submerged for up to five minutes, an ability they use to evade predators. Capybaras can sleep in water, keeping only their noses out of the water. As temperatures increase during the day, they wallow in water and then graze during the late afternoon and early evening. They also spend time wallowing in mud. They rest around midnight and then continue to graze before dawn.

MEET GUS, BELLE and JASMINE.
As you may have guessed, our new capybaras troupe is made up of one male and two females. They are located in the South American realm beside the pygmy hippo display and directly across from the ring-tailed lemurs. All three are very young, and have lots of growing to do.

Gus and the gals can be found in the South American at the Zoo realm directly beside Lola and Monty, our pygmy hippos.
That very distinctive tail, plus newfound fame from a featured role in the Madagascar movies, ring-tailed lemurs have quickly become a zoo favorite... and new to our South American realm.

The ring-tailed lemur (*Lemur catta*) is a large strepsirrhine primate and the most recognized lemur due to its long, black and white ringed tail. It belongs to Lemuridae, one of five lemur families, and is the only member of the Lemur genus. Like all lemurs it is endemic to the island of Madagascar. Inhabits gallery forests to spiny scrub in the southern regions of the island. It is omnivorous and the most terrestrial of extant lemurs. The animal is diurnal, being active exclusively in daylight hours.

The ring-tailed lemur is highly social, living in groups of up to 30 individuals. It is also female dominant, a trait common among lemurs. To keep warm and reaffirm social bonds, groups will huddle together. The ring-tailed lemur will also sunbathe, sitting upright facing its underside, with its thinner white fur towards the sun. Like other lemurs, this species relies strongly on its sense of smell and marks its territory with scent glands. The males perform a unique scent marking behavior called spur marking and will participate in stink fights by impregnating their tail with their scent and wafting it at opponents.

As one of the most vocal primates, the ring-tailed lemur uses numerous vocalizations including group cohesion and alarm calls. Experiments have shown that the ring-tailed lemur, despite the lack of a large brain (relative to simiiform primates), can organize sequences, understand basic arithmetic operations and preferentially select tools based on functional qualities.

The ring-tailed lemur is a relatively large lemur. Its average weight is 5lbs. Its head to body length ranges between 15-18 inches, its tail length is 22-25 inches, and its total length is 37-43 inches. The species has a slender frame and narrow face, fox-like muzzle. The ring-tailed lemur’s trademark, a long, bushy tail, is ringed in alternating black and white transverse stripes, always ending in a black tip. The total number of rings matches the number of caudal vertebrae. Its tail is longer than its body and is not prehensile. Instead, it is only used for balance, communication, and group cohesion.

The fur is very thick and dense. The chest coat and throat are white or cream. The back coat varies from gray to rosy-brown, sometimes with a brown pygal patch around the tail region, where the fur grades to pale gray or grayish brown. The dorsal coloration is slightly darker around the neck and crown. The hair on the throat, cheeks, and ears is white or off-white and also less dense, allowing the dark skin underneath to show through. The muzzle is dark grayish and the nose is black, and the eyes are encompassed by black triangular patches. Facial whiskers are developed and found above the lips, on the cheeks, and on the eyebrows. The ears are relatively large compared to other lemurs and are covered in hair, which has only small tufts if any. Although slight pattern variations in the facial region may be seen between individuals, there are no obvious differences between the sexes.

The tapetum is highly visible in this species because the...
Spirit of Madagascar

**ring-tailed lemurs**

Continued from page 8...
Pigmentation of the back surface of the eye, which is present in, but varies between, all lemurs, is very spotty. The ring-tailed lemur also has a rudimentary foveal depression on the retina. Another shared characteristic with the other strepsirrhine primates is the rhinarium, a moist, naked, glandular nose supported by the upper jaw and protruding beyond the chin. The rhinarium continues down where it divides the upper lip. The upper lip is attached to the premaxilla, preventing the lip from protruding and thus requiring the lemur to lap water rather than using suction.

The ring-tailed lemur is diurnal and semi-terrestrial. It is the most terrestrial of lemur species, spending as much as 33% of its time on the ground. However, it is still considerably arboreal, spending 23% of its time in the mid-level canopy, 25% in the upper-level canopy, 6% in the emergent layer and 13% in small bushes. Troop travel is 70% terrestrial.

Troop size, home range, and population density vary by region and food availability. The average troop ranges in size from 13-15 individuals. Home range size varies between 15-86 acres. Endemic to southern and southwestern Madagascar, the ring-tailed lemur ranges further into highland areas than other lemurs. It inhabits deciduous forests, dry scrub, montane humid forests, and forests along riverbanks.

Despite reproducing readily in captivity and being the most populous lemur in zoos worldwide, numbering more than 2,000 individuals, the ring-tailed lemur is listed as endangered by the IUCN Red List due to habitat destruction and hunting for bush meat and the exotic pet trade. At present (as of early 2017), the population in the wild is believed to have crashed as low as 2,000 individuals due to habitat loss, poaching and hunting, making them far more critically endangered.
Do you like Green eggs and ham? I do not like them, Sam-I-am. I do not like Green eggs and ham. Would you like them here or there... or what about at the Zoo’s Annual Docent Banquet?

Tuesday, January 31, the Montgomery Zoo and the Montgomery Area Zoological Society (MAZS) hosted the Annual Docent / Zooteen Appreciation Banquet honoring the volunteers that serve the Montgomery Zoo’s Education Department. This year’s banquet theme was based on Dr. Seuss’ legendary tale entitled *Green Eggs and Ham*. This group of loyal and dedicated volunteers work thousands of hours caring for and learning about the Zoo’s various education animals; including a collection of small mammals, reptiles, exotic fowl and birds of prey.

Throughout the year, these dedicated and loyal Zoo ambassadors visit schools, churches, retirement homes, civic organizations and community events presenting and educating guests about our planet’s wildlife. Each of them play a valued role at the Montgomery Zoo, and we greatly appreciate them sharing their gifts and talents with the Montgomery Zoo and the River Region community.

During the night’s festivities, zooteens, docents and guests enjoyed an evening of good food, games, fellowship and awards. Zoo Education Curator, Jennifer Hutcheson and Zoo Deputy Director, Marcia Woodard presented various awards; with the highlight of the evening being Docent of the Year. This year’s recipients are Emily Duke and Joseph Massey.

**Emily Duke** is a biology graduate of the University of Alabama, and currently in graduate school at Auburn University Montgomery obtaining her Master’s Degree in Education. Emily has been volunteering with the Zoo’s Education Department since she was a zooteen. When asked about receiving this award, Emily replied, “While it is an honor to receive this award, the greatest honor has been having the opportunity to spend eight years serving in the Montgomery Zoo’s Education Department. I am extremely blessed to have had so many wonderful experiences educating people in our area and around the state on the importance of our planet’s wildlife. I would not trade the time I have spent volunteering at the Montgomery Zoo for anything.”

**Joseph Massey** has been a volunteer in the Education Department since 2004. He is an environmental science graduate from Auburn University Montgomery. Joseph currently volunteers multiple days per week helping to care for the animals, maintain exhibits, and aids in programs and camps. He is a level 4 handler, which means he is able to handle and work with all the animals in the department. When asked about receiving this award, Joseph replied, “I feel honored to be chosen as Docent of the Year. Volunteering with the Montgomery Zoo’s Education Department gives me the opportunity to do things I really enjoy -- promoting conservation through animal education with people of all ages and working with animals.”

Other awards given out: Special certificates... **Continued on page 12**
Food, games, fun and fellowship are always the cornerstone of any Zooteen Docent Banquet. Left: Participants enjoying lots of green food and playing a game to win prizes. Right: Marcia Woodard, Emily Duke, Joseph Massey and Jennifer Hutcheson with the Docent of the Year cakes. Congrats Emily and Joseph.
Come on by the Mann Museum and check out the newly renovated gift shop. New counters, and displays making shopping and entering the Zoo and Museum so much easier and faster.

And what better way to celebrate than to have a SALE. We have a lot of different things on sale, marked 50% off. We also have Webkinz on sale $3 each while they last. So hurry, hurry, hurry!

While you are checking the sales out don’t forget about Zoo Weekend you will be able to enter the Mann Museum at a discount rate of $3 a person. Experience the great outdoors on the inside. You will stand inches away from a 10 foot Polar bear. Peer into the eyes of a Hammerhead shark. Feel the pelt and velvet antlers of a caribou while exploring the corridors of the Mann Wildlife Learning Museum at the Montgomery Zoo. The unique, one-of-a-kind museum houses one of the Southeast’s largest collection of preserved North American wildlife, aquatic life, artifacts and fossils. Experience these beautiful creatures in natural settings and habitats.

The Museum is located adjacent to the Zoo, across from the African elephant’s exhibit and right across the railroad tracks from the Chimpanzee habitat. The Mann Museum is climate controlled and never a cloud in the sky. So enjoy the great outdoors rain or shine in the comfort of inside. And always a great family baragin while visiting the Zoo with a combo admission purchase.

New museum sales counter is installed and in place, ready to welcome costumers. Quick reminder, admission to the Museum is only $3 during Zoo Weekend.

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**MANN MUSEUM | MUSEUM ENTRY FACE LIFT**

**Mann Wildlife Learning Museum at the Montgomery Zoo**

Hours of operation: 9:00am - 5:00pm
Seven days a week.
Last Mann Museum entrance is at 4:30pm.

**Admission to Mann Museum**

Adults: $7
Children (3-12): $6
Toddlers (2 years and younger): FREE
Seniors 65+: $6

**Combo admission to Zoo and Museum**

Adults: $20
Children (3-12): $15
Toddlers (2 years and younger): FREE
Seniors 65+: $18

Groups large and small are welcome.

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**Continued from page 10...**


**Yearly Service Awards:**

- **3 year service awards:** Jillian Betts, Danielle Crowe, Kenneth Dawkins, and Brittnay Rawls.
- **5 year service award:** Casey Ward.
- **8 year service awards:** Ann Blair, Annabeth Crittenden, and Kathleen Roberts.
- **12 year service awards:** Joseph Massey and Pam Smith.
- **15 year service award:** Beth Parrish
- **20 year service award:** Brooks Darby.

Please help us in congratulating all of our dedicated and loyal Zooteens and Docents for the wonder job that each of them does. We are forever thankful.
Zoo Weekend is Saturday and Sunday, March 11-12, 9am - 6pm. It is an awesome and fun way for students and adults alike to enjoy a day at the Zoo while volunteering for a good cause.

Zoo Weekend is quickly approaching and we need all hands on deck. During the two day event approximately 300 volunteers serve at the zoo and help make Zoo Weekend a successful event. Volunteers assist with working fun carnival style games, taking tickets at rides and bounce houses, checking in entertainment, and much much more!

For student, civic, or company groups looking to volunteer together, Zoo Weekend is the perfect opportunity to earn service hours and support the community while having fun and building relationships as a team. Opportunities are available to volunteer for one or multiple shifts. Those interested in volunteering are encouraged to contact Meaghan Weir at (334) 240-4930 or mweir@montgomeryal.gov. With your help we can make Zoo Weekend 2017 the best yet!

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER TODAY!

Volunteers | We need you
Meaghan L. Weir, Marketing and Public Relations Manager

Lola and Monty, facebook, twitter and social media sensations, collected nearly 10,000 reactions in January 2017 for the #cuteanimaltweetoff contest. Awww so sweet.

Volunteer information
Name ____________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________
City ___________________________ ST ___________ Zip _______________
Phone ___________________________________________________________
Email ___________________________________________________________
Area(s) of interest _________________________________________________
Special event _____________________________________________________
Best time(s) available _____________________________________________

Thank you for your support!
Please mail to: Meaghan Weir, Montgomery Zoo, 2301 Coliseum Parkway, Montgomery, AL 36110, (334) 240-4902 or mweir@montgomeryal.gov

ZOO WEEKEND IS COMING!

If you are interested in volunteering at the Montgomery Zoo for special events or if you just want to become part of the team, please contact Meaghan Weir at (334) 240-4930, register online at montgomeryzoo.com, email mweir@montgomeryal.gov or just drop the completed enrollment form below in the mail. We’d love to have you join us!
Kidzone!

Kidzone!

Color Me Cute comes both wet and furry

By ground or by air?
Although they are capable climbers, ring-tailed lemurs spend a third of their time on the ground foraging for food. They range far to find leaves, flowers, bark, sap, and small invertebrates to eat. When the lemurs travel over ground, they keep their tails in the air to ensure everyone in the group is in sight and stays together.

Seconds anyone?
An adult capybara eats 8 pounds of grass per day. Although they are not related to ruminants (like cattle), capybaras regurgitate their food and chew it several times. Capybaras also eat their own feces to provide bacteria that help in digestion of food.

Webkinz on sale at the Mann Museum, hurry while supplies last...
All Webkinz $3. What a deal!

JUNE 5-JULY 28: ZOO SUMMER CAMP
Backyard Adventures at Zoo Summer Camp, June 5 - July 28. A fun-filled, educational wildlife experience for kids 5-12 years old, boys and girls, half and full day camps available. Enjoy scavenger hunts, behind the scene tours, live animal presentations, special one-on-one animal experiences, classroom projects, games, craft time, riding the train, pedal boats, and sky lift, zookeeper talks and so much more. Register today online or at the Zoo.
Pedicures for elephants? Sure thing. We do it all time. Healthy feet equal happy and healthy elephants. Foot problems constitute the single most critical ailment of elephants. Therefore feet on elephants are inspected and cleaned regularly.

The elephant foot has five fingers that are not identifiable by visualization. African elephants, as we have at the Zoo, have four toe nails on the front feet and three toe nails on the rear feet. The feet are covered by skin, toe nails, and a thickened but flexible sole. The sole is called the slipper. Elephant nails and slippers grow between ¼ to ½ inches per month. Guess what? Toe nails have cuticles similar to human fingers.

During regular exams, the nails, slipper, and cuticles are checked for overgrowth and trimmed as necessary. A hoof rasp is used on the slipper to prevent overgrowth and a hoof knife or hoof nippers are used for overgrowth of cuticles. If excessive cuticle growth occurs, then hang nails can result. We all know how painful that can be. Also maintenance often includes shortening nails to prevent ground pressure and rounding corners of the nails. The slipper is brushed with a stiff bristled brush and checked for foreign bodies imbedded in any of the cracks and grooves. Objects are removed with a hoof knife or hoof pick as you would use on a horse’s feet. The foot is checked for swelling, heat, discharge, or odors. Also do not forget about cleaning under the toe nail regularly as you would your own fingers and toes.

Two problems can arise without proper foot care: 1) Hyperkeratosis, which is a thickening of the skin and treated with sandpaper or a rasp and softened with vegetable oils. 2) Pododermatitis, which is an infectious process of the foot and treated by soaking the foot in a disinfectant solution.

As you see, human feet are not all that different from those of an elephant. Elephants have finger and toe nails, and do not forget about the slippers. Think about it the next time you get a pedicure or paint your nails.

Winter Animal Enrichment Storybook Tales was one of our best enrichment days ever. Thank you to everyone that attended, participated and worked so hard to build all the enrichment items. A special thanks to Capitol Container, Home Depot and Costco for the larger boxes and animal cutouts used during the event.
ZOO WEEKEND
MONTGOMERY ZOO AND MANN MUSEUM
SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MARCH 11 - 12, 9am - 6pm

SEE ANIMALS from AROUND THE GLOBE. ENJOY GREAT FAMILY FUN TIME. SEE LIVE ENTERTAINMENT and ANIMAL PRESENTATIONS. DELIGHT in PLAYING GAMES and WINNING PRIZES. RELISH in the ARRAY of CONCESSIONS. SAVE on DISCOUNTED MEMBERSHIPS. HOPE ABOARD OUR TRAIN. FLY HIGH on a SKYLIFT RIDE. ENJOY SOME PERSONAL TIME WITH THE ANIMALS @ PARAKEET COVE, GIRAFFE ENCOUNTER, PONY RIDES, PETTING ZOO, and CAMEL RIDES.

JOIN THE FUN AT THE MONTGOMERY ZOO!