

# Bergen County Zoological Park Monthly Newsletter

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## W H O ' S N E W A T T H E Z O O ?

**James J. Tedesco,  
III**

**County Executive**

**Board of Chosen  
Freeholders**

**James Koth,  
Director of Parks**

**Marianne Vella  
Zoo Director**

### Green Iguana

A male green iguana has taken up residence the zoo. Green iguanas (Iguana iguana) are native to the rain forests of northern Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean Islands, and southern Brazil. They are among the largest lizards in the Americas, growing to 6.5 feet but weighing only about 11 pounds. They spend most of their lives in the canopy, eating leaves, flowers and fruit. Surprisingly good swimmers, they often bask in trees overhanging rivers and can escape predators by jumping into the water below.

He is joined in his habitat by

a red-footed tortoise, who has outgrown her former home in the education center. Red-footed tortoises are also from South America and the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Barbados. They live in dry and wet forests areas, grasslands and the savanna. In the wild, their food consists mostly of leaves, grasses, fungi, fruits and flowers. Male red-footed tortoises grow up to 13.5 inches long and can weigh up to 20 pounds. Females average 11.25 inches long.

### Silver Gray Dorking Chickens

Dorkings are one of the oldest known breeds of chicken. According to popular legend,

Romans brought them to England around 43 AD. The breed was named for the town of Dorking, an important poultry breeding center. Dorkings are heavy birds - roosters weigh about 9 pounds and hens weigh about 7 pounds. Silver Gray Dorkings have very large combs and very short legs. Despite their short legs, they like to roost in trees! Dorking chickens are one of only 5 birds that have 5 toes rather than the usual 4. Chickens are foragers. They are omnivores that scratch the ground to uncover foods like insects, worms, seeds and berries.

## F R I E N D S O F T H E B E R G E N C O U N T Y Z O O

The Friends of the Bergen County Zoo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing financial support to the Bergen County Zoological Park for the welfare of its animals, educational programs and family-friendly facilities. It is the generous support of our sponsors, donors, members and zoo visitors that allow us to meet this mission. The Friends offer a variety of memberships for individuals and families. Please visit [www.communitypass.net](http://www.communitypass.net), choose "Friends of the Bergen County Zoo, NJ" (for Community or Organization) and continue through to either Create an Account or Existing Users can Log in. Visit us at [www.friendsofbergencountyzoo.org](http://www.friendsofbergencountyzoo.org) or like us on Facebook! The Friends look forward to seeing you at the Zoo!

## A Z A S A F E : S A V I N G A N I M A L S F R O M E X T I N C T I O N I N A T A S T E F U L W A Y

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums tasked their membership with creating a proposal to not only pinpoint endangered and threatened animals needing immediate assistance but to also help determine an immediate course of action to help save them. The Association then directed energy, funding and assistance to those plans in the hope of making an immediate and measurable impact on the species.

The latest development in this area is a tasteful fundraiser, the Wildlife Wine Club. Drink wine – save animals – stay wild!

Your purchase of these bottles helps endangered species around the globe. The AZA's first two releases, the African Lion Cabernet and the Sea Turtle Chardonnay feature two endangered species that need protection now. 100% of AZA's net proceeds support AZA SAFE.

The 2017 African Lion Cabernet Sauvignon is described as: Toasty American Oak integrates with blueberries, dark plum and blackberries. Bold sweet tannins hold up a velvety mouthfeel,

leading to a juicy finish with dark cherries, violets and baking spice.

The 2017 Sea Turtle Chardonnay is described as: Barrel fermentation makes this chardonnay rich and decadent. Honeysuckle, tropical fruits and ripe pear integrate with toasted oak and vanilla on the nose.

For more information or to order one of these unique environmentally friendly fundraiser wines please follow the link below:

[limited-edition wines](#)

Look for more articles detailing the efforts of AZA SAFE in this and upcoming newsletters.



## B E R G E N C O U N T Y Z O O P O U N C E S O N C H E E T A H C O N S E R V A T I O N

The Cheetah Conservation Fund (CCF) is busy breeding and training dogs. Why would a Cheetah Conservation group breed dogs? One of the biggest threats to cheetahs are the many farmers who believe that killing cheetahs will safeguard their livestock. By breeding Livestock Guarding Dogs (LGD) to protect the flocks of goats and sheep, the CCF's unique conserva-

tion approach helps keep the predators from killing the farmer's animals, thus also protecting the cheetahs.

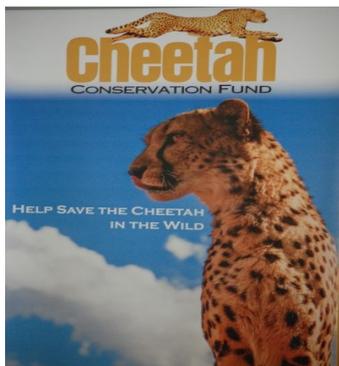
The Livestock Guarding Dog program began 25 years ago. Dr. Laurie Marker and Dr. Ray Coppinger joined forces to breed, train and distribute Anatolian Shepherd and Kangal dogs to Namibia's farmers for little to no cost. Sam Nujoma, Namibia's first president,

received two of the first dogs to protect his goat herd. Since then, 650 dogs have been placed with farmers. Currently there is a 1 -2 year wait for a trained LGD. The puppies are raised with goats and so see the goats as members of their family. They will stay with the flock and guard the herd, alerting owners to the presence of predators with loud barks. Cheetahs usually

back away from a barking dog but the large size of these breeds means that they are also capable of fighting to defend the flock. This program has reduced livestock predation in program herds by 70 to 100%.

On Thursday July 25th Paola Bari of the New York chapter of the CCF spoke to zoo pa-

trons about this important conservation program. Paola has traveled to cheetah sanctuaries and now helps educate the public about the declining cheetah population. For more information, look online at [www.cheetah.org](http://www.cheetah.org).



**Livestock Guarding Dogs with their flocks and farmer**

## FROM DOCENT TO EMPLOYEE

Fifteen years ago, I was reading our local paper and saw an article about being a docent for the Bergen County Zoo. I looked up the word “docent” and found out it was a fancy name for being a volunteer. The article said you would be trained and there were several types of docent positions available. A chance to work with animals? Sign me up! So I contacted my friend/neighbor, Elaine Rizzo and told her all about it. She also loves animals and I thought we could do it together! We signed up and got our training which consisted of one or two days a week for 6 weeks. We learned about all of the Education animals and how to handle them. I was so excited!

As a kid I had always dreamed of working at the zoo. My parents took me to the zoo and I have wonderful memories of seeing the animals and riding the train, like most Bergen County residents. After graduation I even looked into taking Zoology at BBC, but it never happened.

My friend Elaine and I officially became Animal Encounter Docents partners. Being an AE docent meant that we would take an Education animal to the nursing home that we were assigned to once a month. Regent Care in Hackensack became our assigned nursing home. We would show the animal to the residents and most times (depending on the animal) they would get to touch it. Most resi-

dents really loved when we came in. It was the MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE to be able to go into a room, observe the individual sitting there staring at the wall and then completely change the expression on their face to a bright eyed smile! Knowing we had the ability to do that really made my day! Most residents thanked us profusely and would even say, “God Bless You Girls!” While they enthusiastically pet our animals, they would ask questions and then the questions would lead into stories about their youth. So many of them lived on farms and had some of the same animals we would bring in. It really made us think about those unfortunate resi-

dents who do not have relatives or friends to visit them. We really made a difference in their lives! This was a very fulfilling experience for me.

Of course there were always those rare few, (thank Goodness) that would wave us away. Some would even yell at us and say, “GET THAT THING AWAY FROM ME!” It was somewhat bewildering as we would sheepishly walk away with a cute bunny rabbit in our hands, scratching our heads. But of course we always needed to remind ourselves that some of the residents may just not be animal people or may just have Dementia or Alzheimer’s.

We went to the same facility for 15 years and in those years we got to know most of the patients and

FROM DOCENT TO EMPLOYEE, CONT

the employees. It was sometimes hard to get to know people only to find out that the next time we returned, they had passed away. We shed many tears over the years after becoming attached to some really lovely people. I guess it was just part of the job.

As a docent we are required to get ongoing training, so as to not get sloppy or forget our safety protocols when handling animals. This past January, I was at the zoo for training when Carol Fusco approached me about possibly taking a part time position. When she asked, I told her I needed to think about it. She explained what some of the responsibilities would be. After our discussion I went home and thought long and hard about how I was going to be able to juggle it all. Then I remembered my dream of always wanting to work at the zoo, so I discussed it

with my husband and we agreed that the decision should be YES!

After submitting my resume and filling out the paperwork, I finally started this past March. I must admit that I felt very nervous! My very first day, Kelsey Langenfeld showed me how to open and lock the doors to the Education Center, how to turn on the Education computers and how to feed the saltwater fish. When I went through all of the steps, all I could think of is how can I ever remember all of this?! I went home and cried and said I will never own salt water fish, it is just so difficult!! Although I am happy to say that I have conquered it and no longer feel overwhelmed by it.

When you volunteer somewhere, then you become an actual employee, there is a different mindset. Luckily for me, I worked with Emily Olsen. She was a walking encyclopedia! At first I was completely intimidated. I told Car-

ol that I will never know as much as Emily. Using her great ability in making people feel comfortable, she assured me that she felt the same way! I consider myself extremely lucky to have learned so much from her. Emily does not work at our zoo anymore, but she left me with all of the tools and her wealth of knowledge. We did many programs and birthday parties together. After observing Emily I knew what I had to do. Because the zoo is a very busy place, I was the baby bird being forced to fly on my own. It was time for me to get in there and do it all on my own! I am happy to say that I am doing it and now train others.

Every day I go in to my zoo job never knowing exactly what I will be doing that day, but it has become fun, educational and dream fulfilling.

Mary Yabroudy

LEMONADE-AID

On Tuesday July 30, 2019 a bubbly young woman came to the Bergen County Zoo with more on her mind than just seeing the Capybara. Courtney, her mother and grandmother dropped off a donation in the donation bin in the front of the zoo, money Courtney and friends made at a Glen Rock lemonade stand. Courtney and Glen Rock residents Madison, Bridget, Finn, Madi and Olinie raised \$40.00 to be donated to an animal cause; they chose to donate to the Bergen County Zoo the lemonade money as well as an additional \$50.00 for a total of \$110.00 donation.



UPCOMING EDUCATION EVENTS

- Saturday August 17**      **Cottontop Tamarin Day**
- Saturday October 5**      **Farm Animals Day**
- Saturday November 2**      **National Bison Day**

## WAYS TO SUPPORT THE ZOO

There are numerous ways to support the Bergen County Zoo:

- Consider becoming a zoo member
- Sponsor an Animal
- Enroll in our docent/volunteer program
- Purchase Animal Art

Information on all of these programs is available at the Zoo, our website



**Bergen County Zoological Park**  
**216 Forest Avenue**  
**Paramus, NJ 07652**  
**201-634-3100**

Bergen County Zoological Park



[www.co.bergen.nj.us/bcparks](http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/bcparks)

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## ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

The Bergen County Zoo is proud to be an AZA Accredited Zoo.

The Association of Zoos & Aquariums provides its members with the services, high standards, best practices, and program coordination to be leaders in animal welfare, public engagement,

### Reminders:

Bergen County Residents must provide proof of residency to receive the discounted rate. Forms of proof are: Driver's License, Utility bill to the residence, Bergen County issued ID Card.

Zoo Members must show their membership

**James J. Tedesco, III**

**County Executive**

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**