


5-1-1978

Potpourri

Elephant Editors

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The basic objective is to establish an Elephant Library which can serve Elephant Interest Group (EIG) members as well as non-members. For this purpose I am trying to acquire books that deal with any aspects of the natural history of elephants. A letter was dispatched to various publishers in the United States and abroad requesting a list of books and their prices. It was suggested that readers having in their possession any books that they wish to donate to the Elephant Library be encouraged to do so.

It is hoped that once the collection is organized and catalogued, EIG members and non-members (members have first priority) will borrow books. The main problem, of course, is finding a space to house the library and enlisting the aid of a person to care for the collection on a part-time basis.

ERRATUM

In Elephant Newsletter, no. 1, an error appeared on page 6. The Elephant Symposium is planned to take place during the 59th Annual Meeting of the ASM at Corvallis, Oregon and not at Portland, Oregon as was stated in the first printing of the previous issue. This error was corrected in subsequent printings.

POTPOURRI

Acknowledgements: In addition to the acknowledgements referred to in "A Note From the Editor", the editor wishes to thank all those members who sent information to the newsletter; especially, I would like to thank Richard J. Reynolds, Marvin L. Jones and Toby Styles. The editor also wishes to acknowledge the following persons: Paul Engstrom, Peggy Shine, Jackie Tien, and Karen Varty, all of whom are students at Grosse Pointe South High School (GPSHS), and who came to help the editor with various office work. The editor would also like to acknowledge GPSHS' Environmental Science teacher, Greg Heffner. Andy Prychodko also helped with office work and Heide Zaydel prepared the phylogenetic chart for the elephant display case on the Wayne State University campus. Sherwin S. Collins was most helpful in expediting the final typing.

Ahmed: The following is additional information about Ahmed the elephant (see also back front cover) as was sent to the editor on October 14, 1977, by Alison K. K. Hillman. She writes: "Ahmed preservation at the National Museum of Nairobi, Kenya, is in the form of:

- 1) a life-size (and very life-like) epoxy version cast, since the skin was not preserved in time to be stuffed, and
- 2) the complete real skeleton (erected by my husband Chris, with help from me) which will shortly bear the real tusks."

Back Issues: Back issues of Elephant Newsletter no. 1 can be obtained for one dollar per copy. Please send a check or money order payable to Wayne State University, Department of Biology, and indicate on the back or below under memo, "Elephant Interest Group" or just "Elephant". Please do not send cash. After the regular mailing list is completed, copies of Elephant Newsletter no. 2 will be available for two dollars per copy.

"T" Shirts: EIG member, Ron Polsky, suggested that a "T" shirt be designed for the symposium in Corvallis. If time permits, we can discuss this or any of the above matters in Athens, Georgia.

Questionnaire: A slightly modified version of the questionnaire that was attached to newsletter no. 1 is included herein. This was done to encourage our new and old members to send in any information or requests they wish to have appear in future issues. Please PRINT or TYPE the information. Some of the questionnaires returned to the editor were illegible and, therefore, we had to mobilize our calligraphy analyzer from the Anthropology Department.

Zooella the Elephant: This summary report about Zooella was written in response to numerous requests and questions presented to the editor as a result of the wide publicity this case had generated.

Zooella was a female Asian elephant (Elephas maximus) that lived for 13 years in the John Ball Park Zoo in Grand Rapids, Michigan U.S.A. On Tuesday, March 28, 1978, an article appeared in the Detroit Free Press entitled "For Sale: Elephant in need of friend". That article stated that Zooella's temper tantrums were dangerous and that no one could enter her enclosure. Her long time keeper and friend, Harry Maxim became ill and quit working. Zoo officials hoped that new surroundings and other elephants for companionship might help Zooella's disposition.

Neither the anticipated sale nor Zooella's improvement materialized. A week later she had plopped over on her side and never rose again. Zoo officials tried to help Zooella but all efforts were in vain. She was finally put to death on April 7, 1978. At the time of her death Zooella was 23 years old and weighed approximately 5,000 pounds. Her body was transported to Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan where a necropsy was to be performed at the Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory. Post-Mortem examinations showed that "A series of strokes and hydrocephalus-water on the brain were probably the ultimate cause of death" (Detroit Free Press, April 22, 1978).

On that Friday when Zooella was put to sleep, the editor contacted the director of the John Ball Park Zoo requesting that in the event of the animal's death he would like to have the carcass for dissection. The same request was conveyed by the telephone to the staff at the Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory at Michigan State University. In both telephone conversations, the editor explained, in detail, what practical value was to be retrieved from a detailed dissection performed on a specimen of a known-aged endangered species. All arrangements at the Wayne State University campus were completed in order to receive the carcass for dissection: a refrigerated truck was mobilized, a team of 10 friends and members of the Elephant Interest Group were alerted, and a space and tools were already available. The data we were looking for included various measurements, weights and volumes of all extremities, organs and organ systems.

For some unclear reason(s) Zooella's body was incinerated that same Friday afternoon. Once we found out that the carcass was being cremated we desperately tried to save as much as we could enlisting the help of the Chairman of the Biology Department and staff at the Department of Comparative Medicine of Wayne State University. This was all in vain, as Zooella was cremated. It was very unfortunate that such a rare opportunity had slipped by us. Wayne State University is still interested in obtaining an elephant for dissection. Please see description under Thompson, William and Shoshani, Jeheskel in the "Requests" section in this issue.