

Because of you:

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Pueblo Zoological Society



# ZooNews

The biannual newsletter for Pueblo Zoo supporters

**PUEBLO'S**  
*Last*  
**SUN BEAR**

Photo: Ashley Bowen

## Your support brings Barney comfort as he ages.

At 30, Barney is well into his golden years. After eight years together, Gina knows him well. “We watch him closely for changes in mobility, mood, weight, and appetite, and we adjust to meet his new needs. Right now, he’s doing well, but he sleeps more, is agitated by loud noises, and is growing more and more grey hairs. Bi-weekly, comprehensive, high-risk evaluations ensure we work as a team to keep him comfortable.”

Barney is one of just 15 sun bears left in AZA zoos - a reality that makes their sustainability in zoos nearly impossible. “It’s sad to think that sun bears, like Barney and Solar Sue before him, won’t be here for future generations, but it’s important that zoos focus on animals

where we can still have a sustainable population and positive conservation impact. That doesn’t mean we won’t give everything we have to Barney while he is still with us,” explains Ashley Bowen, General Curator.

While the zoo was closed to the public, our old man Barney enjoyed the peace and quiet more than many of our other animals. Now, you’re most likely to see him in the early morning when he enjoys laying in his pool. And, until the time when he leaves us, your donations will support all the care that keeps him happy, healthy, and eagerly gobbling his favorite treats: peanut butter and whipped cream. We love you, Barney!

# CARE DURING COVID

Even though you weren't able to be at the zoo in person, many of you were here in spirit as the zoo weathered an historic 83-day closure from March to June. You gave generously on Facebook, through the mail, and online, and your notes of encouragement kept our spirits up and the animals fed.

On these pages, you'll find the stories you made possible. Each story comes from the "red section" which includes animals such as otters, penguins and more. To keep a red section expert safely working each day, Area Supervisor Sue Greer and Section Keeper Brittany Merlo didn't see each other for all 83 days, each working two days on followed by two days off. Without the other to help, caring for the 39 animals in their section kept them racing the clock every day. *Thankfully, they had your support to get them through.* **Thank you for being a part of our zoo family and caring for our animals as much as we do!**



# New sights for Benny and Sallie!

*Cataract surgery restores vision for elder penguins*

As elective surgeries began to resume for humans, the same held true for animals. Sallie and Benny were both able to undergo cataract surgery from the veterinary ophthalmologists at CSU-Fort Collins. This surgery was especially important for Sallie, who prefers to “catch” her fish - a hard feat for a penguin with blurry vision! During the closure, keepers tried to improve her hand-feeding skills, but she proved a hard study. After a few weeks of daily eye drops (would you be brave enough to give eye drops to a sharp-beaked penguin?) and no swimming, the 24-year-old and 29-year-old penguin rejoined the flock with new eyes and a lot less squinting! Big thanks to the doctors at CSU, Dr. Kathy, and Keepers Sue and Brittany for going above and beyond for these special birds!



Photo: Mike Byers

## Pallas' Cat Recovery

*Mushdog is now slightly less grumpy*

If there's one thing you know about our resident grumpy cats, it's that the Pallas' cats love to climb. But near the end of this year's breeding season, Mushdog fell and slipped a disk, causing him to lose almost all mobility and control in his hind legs. Keepers feared the worst but sprung into action. While we humans were in our own quarantine, Mushdog took up residence in the zoo's new 6'x4' quarantine area, outfitted with special non-slip carpet and a game camera - a tool that became essential to his recovery. “Pallas' cats are most active at night, and I needed to know how he was moving around. Without the camera, I would have been lost,” explains Keeper Sue.

The game camera's images showed slow, but steady progress. After nearly eleven weeks on “bed-rest”, Mushdog had almost fully recovered and was ready to return home. “Of course, the first thing he did was climb the wall! I almost had a heart-attack.” His keepers are planning some modifications to the main exhibit to prevent future falls and ensure safe climbing, but in the meantime, Mushdog is content - at least as content as an internet-famous grumpy cat can be!



Photo: Ashley Bowen

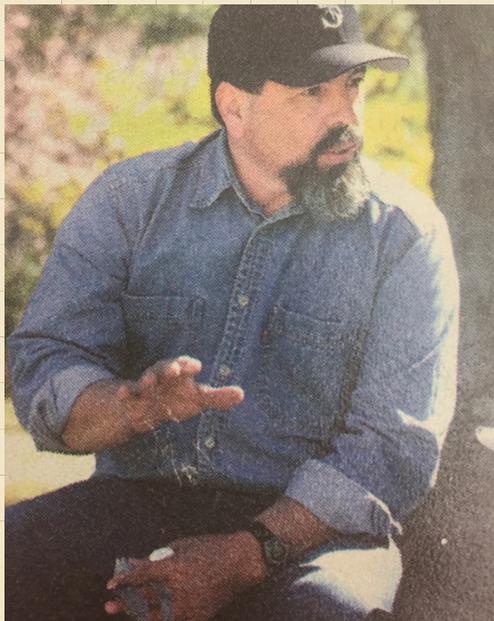
## Otter Family Grows By Five

*Minnow, Moose, Noodle, Juno, and Astrid*

Freyja gave birth to five tiny pups on March 10, and throughout the shut-down, we all had the privilege of watching these babies grow from a half-pound to nearly full grown. Through keeper takeovers, photos, and videos, you didn't have to miss a minute. Caring for these pups brought Keepers Sue and Brittany a lot of joy during the shutdown - and a lot of phone calls! Since they worked on different days to reduce the risk of virus-spread, Brittany and Sue called each other almost daily to discuss each pup's development and care.

Looking back, they laugh about how quickly the pups grew from calm fluff balls to alert and aggressive pups. Brittany took their weights on a Monday with no problem, but when Sue went to get weights on Thursday, the pups screamed, squirmed, and bit at her - still cute, but definitely not cuddly anymore! Today, the pups are visible to the public in the main habitat. Juno is likely to be close to mom. Astrid loves to nap. And Minnow is still the smallest. All five are slowly learning to climb for food, interact with new enrichment, and adjust to life with dad - and Sue and Brittany are close by if they need anything!

# ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: RICHARD MONTANO



The contributions of many minds, hands and spirits go into the evolution of an institution like the zoo over the years. It's nearly impossible to walk the Pueblo Zoo and not have a Richard Montano creation within eyesight. From the penny snake sculpture at the front of the zoo all the way to the lion cub fountain at the back, his artistic signature is stamped all throughout.

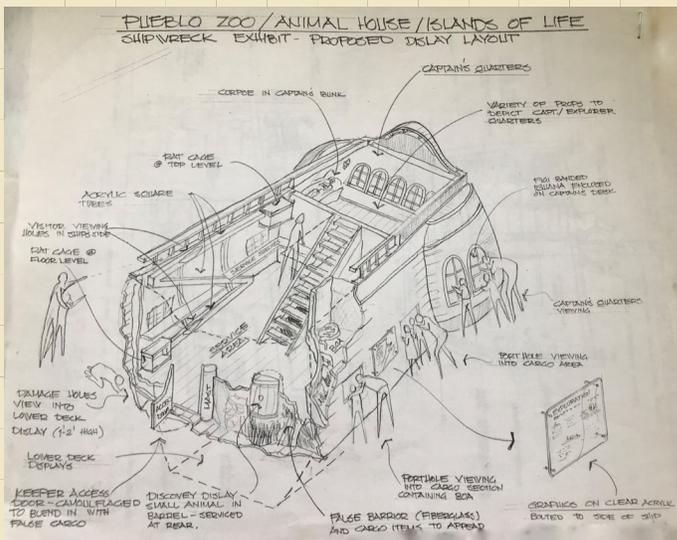
After graduation from what is now CSU-Pueblo, Richard began his career as a civil engineer. However, after a few years of that work, he could not see himself conforming to that kind of work environment and pursued his artistic passions by continuing his studies in studio painting and sculpture. His first zoo commission as a young artist was

to climb high up on a cherry picker and sketch the layout of the zoo for a publication. His talents and ingenuity were recognized immediately and he was called upon more frequently to not just implement projects but to be an integral part of their creation. That right brain/left brain combo of engineering know-how and artistic creativity came to be a boon for the newly formed and energized Pueblo Zoological Society who was striving for ambitious zoo improvements on a slim budget.

“It’s really an accident that I came to work at the zoo, but also fortuitous,” says Mr. Montano. “There are myriads of opportunity to create anything. Ideas are infinite and can come from anywhere. I have not repeated a project in the 40 years I have worked with the zoo. I couldn’t do the same thing over and over.”

When asked about his favorite project, he cited the shipwreck in Islands of Life. “The Directors sent me to San Diego to study the ship that was used in the movie, *Master and Commander*,” says Richard. That project put his engineering experience to work as he analyzed the construction to consider how he might recreate it. It became clear right away that an entire ship would not fit and thus the shipwrecked hull idea came about. The small zoo’s budget always requires creativity when considering resources. A CU theater class took on realistically recreating the captain’s quarters. The cannon was crafted out of five fire extinguishers obtained at a local scrap yard.

The Pueblo Zoo would not look as it does today without the artistry of Richard Montano. And he is far from done as he pours his sweat and ideas into a list of more fun projects in the making.



# Signature Events Bring Connection, Funding for Animals

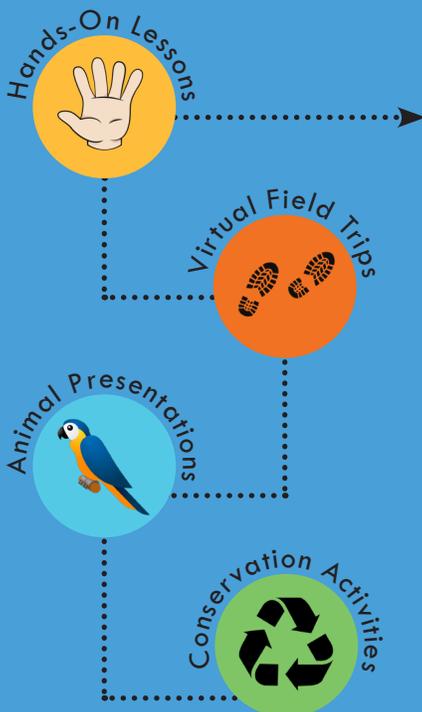


Amid this strange and challenging year, Brew at the Zoo was marked with our first ever virtual concert, just a month into the state-wide shut-down. As virtual became a new normal, zoo lovers all over the country joined us for our online Animal Art and Zoofari auctions as well as the live streamed Zoofari event. Thanks to generous donors like you, Brew at the Zoo and Zoofari raised more than \$82,000 for the zoo! This money will go a long way towards making up the revenue lost during the closure. Senior Week also looked a little different this year, but we were thrilled to open our gates to our senior community nonetheless. We want to thank each of you, and especially our sponsors, for helping us mark these zoo traditions in new ways. Stay safe!

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## VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Sign up today for Pueblo Zoo's K-12 educational programming. Each course meets CDE state standards and Next Generation Science standards in Life Science. Choose from the following 1-hour, standards-aligned programs or contact us to explore more online education opportunities:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Kindergarten:</b> Animal Encounter  | <b>Fourth Grade:</b> Growth & Development  |
| <b>First Grade:</b> Coats and Colors   | <b>Fifth Grade:</b> Food Chains            |
| <b>Second Grade:</b> Biodiversity      | <b>Middle School:</b> Wolves of the West   |
| <b>Third Grade:</b> Animal Adaptations | <b>High School:</b> The Shortgrass Prairie |

To register for a program, visit [pueblozoo.org/virtualprograms](http://pueblozoo.org/virtualprograms) or email [acasey@pueblozoo.org](mailto:acasey@pueblozoo.org) for more information.

## OUR MISSION

To empower people to engage in conservation of animals and their natural habitat

ACCREDITED BY THE  
**ASSOCIATION  
OF ZOOS &  
AQUARIUMS**



Photo: Ashley Bowen



## Letter from the Director

Whether it's peanut butter and peace and quiet for a crotchety ole bear; new, improved eyesight for feisty penguins; back relief for a grumpy cat; or inspired work for an accomplished artist, it seems like we all are trying to find health, happiness and comfort where we can these days. For me and the zoo staff, finding satisfaction in the well-being of our animals gives us reward in these days when we are all seeking some comfort, stability and well-being in our own lives. We also are gratified that we are able to provide a safe, enriching place for guests to find much needed adventure and recreation. Though we can't see smiles behind masks, we know they are there as we hear the laughter and see the excitement. And the safety those masks provide give our staff comfort as they strive to stay healthy so they can continue to care for our animals who don't have a clue that COVID is even a thing. The Pueblo Zoo has long been a place where many have looked to find well-being and inspiration. I won't sugar coat it though, like anywhere, times at the zoo can be stressful these days. Financial worries, health precautions and fears, doing our utmost for the animals we love and serving people who are feeling all of the above. It can be exhausting for everyone. But ultimately, it's worth it if we can continue our mission and continue serving our community. How do we know that? You. You tell us that through your support. You provide us all with comfort and happiness as you help ensure the health of the zoo into the future with your donations and your visits. Thank you for being there for us.

- Abbie Krause, Executive Director

## Upcoming Events

### October 1: Winter hours begin

Open Daily 9:00am - 4:00pm. Cafe closed for the season.

### October 24-25: ZooBoo! 🎃

Goblins, princesses and super heroes welcome! In an effort to promote safe social distancing, we are introducing timed ticketing for this event. There are a limited number of tickets available for each time slot, so purchase yours early! Saturday & Sunday, October 24th-25th, 9-4 pm

**Member BooBonus, Friday Oct 23, 2-6 pm:** Members, this BooBonus is just for you! Get your online-only tickets early to reserve your spot at this exclusive preview. More details online: [www.pueblozoo.org/zooboo](http://www.pueblozoo.org/zooboo)

### November 7: National Bison Day 🐃

The bison is America's national mammal! Help us celebrate our majestic bison during National Bison Day.

### November 7-8: Military Weekend 🇺🇸

Free admission for all military with valid military ID. (Includes veterans, spouse and dependent children)

### November 27-December 27: Electricritters 🎄

The holiday season wouldn't be complete without a visit to Electricritters! See thousands of lights and over a hundred imaginative designs as you walk through the winter wonderland at the Pueblo Zoo. Warm up with a cup of cocoa (and a cookie) at our Candy Cane Cafe and enjoy a memorable experience with the whole family! Every Fri-Sun, Nov. 27 - Dec. 27 and daily Dec. 21-24 5:30-8:30 pm (Closed Christmas Day) Full details: [www.pueblozoo.org/electricritters](http://www.pueblozoo.org/electricritters)

### Holiday Closures

Go to [www.pueblozoo.org/visit](http://www.pueblozoo.org/visit) for more information.