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Animal Profile: Maxine the Macaw

Aquavet Update

In the last issue of *Bellwether* we featured a story about the Aquavet Program. One of Aquavet's goals is to provide the stimulus for veterinary students to pursue careers in aquatic medicine. This is a report on a student who has followed this course.

Dr. Jean Maguire received her V.M.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1980 after doing undergraduate work at Stanford University. As a part of her veterinary education Dr. Maguire spent the summer of 1978 in the Aquavet Program. Since graduation, she has devoted much of her time to research in marine biology. As a research assistant, Dr. Maguire has participated in two cruises—one to study sharks and the other to investigate whales. Both of these studies were conducted by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, Woods Hole, Massachusetts. During one cruise, sharks were caught and electronic transmitters attached to monitor brain temperatures when they moved into cold waters. The whale research was conducted to determine the population distribution of sperm whales in the Caribbean by use of hydrophones.



Mrs. Elizabeth Clark

At present Dr. Maguire is working part-time in a small animal practice in Massachusetts while she anxiously awaits new funding that will permit continuation of her studies on marine animals. While "marking time," she lectures at the Sea Education Foundation.

Dr. Maguire was recently the subject of a feature story in the *Cape Cod Times*.

Bellwether thanks the *Cape Cod Times* for allowing us to use Craig Little's "Animals of the Sea..." as a reference for this article.

New Chair for David Kronfeld

David S. Kronfeld, B.V.Sc., M.V.Sc., Ph.D., Professor of Nutrition, was named to the newly created Elizabeth and William Whitney Clark Chair for Nutrition. It was endowed by Mrs. Elizabeth Clark, Mauretown, VA., a well-known dog fancier and breeder. Mrs. Clark raises Gordon setters, English cocker spaniels, and miniature schnauzers under the Rockaplenty prefix.

Mrs. Clark is an ACK licensed judge for a number of sporting breeds, hound breeds, and miniature schnauzers. She also finds time to serve on the Ladies Committee for the Veterinary Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and is a member of the Volunteer Tour Guides for the new hospital.

Maxine the Macaw

Maxine, a Green-Winged Macaw who lives in the Children's Zoo section of the Philadelphia Zoo, spends more time on the road than do most humans. Almost every morning Maxine travels to various schools and organizations as part of the Zoo's Education Program. Bob Callahan, Superintendent of the Children's Zoo, and other Zoo staff members accompany her, of course.

Maxine is particularly suited to this type of public relations traveling because she possesses typical characteristics of her order—*Psittaciformes*. She is attractive, intelligent, even-tempered, easy to care for, and best of all, she talks.

By mimicking those around her and being conditioned to respond to food cues, Maxine can bark like a dog, quack like a duck, laugh hysterically, and enunciate approximately twenty-five words, including hello, cracker, Hi Rocky, Hi Max, Ralph, Eric, Bob, rat, shut-up, get out of here, and a few unprintables. Fortunately for Mr. Callahan, Maxine has not yet embarrassed him during a demonstration since she is trained to respond to a specific food cue with a specific word. The only time she sounds like a sailor is when she's in the van traveling back and forth from the Zoo.

The story of why she says "Hi Rocky" is intriguing. During a segment of the movie *Rocky II*, Sylvester Stallone proposed to Talia Shire in front of the Lion House at the Zoo. Stallone invited Maxine, along with a boa con-

strictor, to eat lunch with him and the film crew. In honor of meeting this movie star, Maxine was taught to say "Hi Rocky," and did so, to the amusement of all present.

Donated to the Zoo in 1975 by the Terry-Lou Zoo in Scotch Plains, New Jersey, Maxine is about twenty-three years old and could live to be sixty. She eats a normal parrot diet, which consists of parrot seed (mixture of peanuts, sunflower seeds, and other small seeds), orange and apple slices, and a small quantity of meat three times a week.

Acquired as a male, Maxine was recently revealed to be female. It is impossible to determine the sex of a macaw without an internal examination, called venting, and since she was not to be used for breeding purposes, no one ever bothered to make sure that Max was really Max. One day, however, when Mr. Callahan opened Max's cage, he found her sitting on an egg, and renamed her Maxine.

Even-tempered and easy to care for, Maxine exemplifies the type of animal that is well-suited to be a pet, especially for incapacitated people who must remain indoors. Macaws are therapeutic for such people, but the cost to own one may be prohibitive. Young macaws

cost about \$750, and older macaws with a vocabulary can cost up to \$2000.

Maxine may not be the best choice for an incapacitated female, however. Mr. Callahan has found that Maxine is sexually biased; she definitely prefers males. Maxine has rarely shown aggressive behavior towards males, but once latched onto a female trainer's nose and actually swung, almost crushing the woman's nose. Because of this idiosyncrasy, Mr. Callahan usually prefers to handle Maxine. When he is holding her, she can be safely stroked because she tends to pay more attention to Mr. Callahan than the strokers.

When Maxine is not on the road with the Education Program, she's at the Children's Zoo, where she usually draws a large audience of admirers. As spring arrives and more children visit the Zoo, Maxine is sure to be the center of attention.



Photo courtesy of the Philadelphia Zoo.