



4-1-1983

Animal Profile: Just in Time for Christmas

Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association (SCAVMA)

The members of the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association (SCAVMA) at the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, elected the following officers for 1982-1983:

President: Jim Lunig

Vice President: Amy Worrell

Secretary: Cathy Catanzaro

Treasurer: Holly Leather

The faculty adviser is Dr. David Kowalczyk, assistant professor of pharmacology and toxicology.

SCAVMA and its auxiliary, each year, sponsor a number of events. These include: a fall and spring picnic, a square dance and a dinner dance, hoagie and T-shirt sales to raise money for financing student delegates to attend the annual symposium sponsored by the national association of SCAVMA, guest lecturers for monthly meetings, an auction and raffle to raise money for the Student Emergency loan fund.

Students joining SCAVMA have the following benefits: immediate membership in the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) with a waiver of dues for the first year and reduced dues for the next two years of membership; reduced subscription rates for the *AVMA Journal*, and the *American Journal of Veterinary Research*, access to the AVMA Auxiliary Student Loan Fund for juniors and seniors, group term life insurance policies, and malpractice insurance which is available for students in externships and preceptorships, placement service for senior students, assistance for obtaining speakers, and access to a film library.

Continuing Education Program

The final continuing education program for the 1982-1983 calendar year, Health and Economic Programs for the Large Dairy Herd, will be held on Wednesday, May 18, 1983, at the Baltimore Hilton Inn at Reisterstown Road in Baltimore, Maryland. Dr. Kenneth Braun, Professor of Preventative Medicine, from the University of Florida School of Veterinary Medicine; Dr. Lawrence Heider, Professor of Preventative Medicine, from the Ohio State University School of Veterinary Medicine; and Dr. John Fetrow, Associate in Animal Health Economics, from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine will discuss nutritional consultation, reproductive programs, mastitis control programs, record systems, and practice economics in large dairy herds. This course is co-sponsored by the University of Maryland, the University of Pennsylvania, and Penn State University.

For further information and registration please contact: Ashra Markowitz, University of Pennsylvania, School of Veterinary Medicine, 3800 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104; or call (215) 898-4234.

Just in Time for Christmas

On December 25, 1982 between 9:30 and 9:45 a.m. the Philadelphia Zoo received a very special Christmas gift: a baby male gorilla. Measuring approximately two feet and weighing three and a half pounds, the infant is the second gorilla to be born at the Zoo in the last two years. A female, Jessie, was born in 1980.

For almost a month the new gorilla was nameless. But in late January a name was selected from among 12,000 entries in a contest co-sponsored by *The Daily News* and the Philadelphia Zoo. Mrs. Joan Veloski of Drexel Hill entered the winning name, Justin, because the baby was "just in time for Christmas." Mrs. Veloski will be present at Justin's public debut in early February.

Justin and Jessie share the same father, John, however, their mothers are different. Jessie's mother is Samantha and Justin's is Snickers. Snickers, who suffers from arthritis and is partially paralyzed on her right side, gave birth to a stillborn infant in 1974. Last year doctors performed tests on her to determine fertility, and during the second test they discovered her pregnancy. According to keeper, Patti Kuntzmann, Snickers's labor was short and the birth was relatively painless. Mother and infant will share the same cage as Snickers is expected to nurse Justin for six months to a year. Snickers was present during Jessie's birth and for the past nine months she has spent time watching the interaction between Samantha and Jessie.

In the wild, gorillas live in groups with as many as twenty to thirty members. Their behavior is learned through three steps of socialization: maternal, parental, and juvenile, and the group is integral in the learning process. Captive animals are often separated from each other, consequently, they must be taught behavior patterns concerning copulation and infant care.

Snickers, Samantha, and John arrived at the Zoo along with two other males, Tohy and Bobby, in 1969. At that time the Zoo became interested in the treatment of primates in captivity. It was impossible to duplicate the environment of the wild gorilla in the Rare Mammal House where the gorillas were housed. The facilities are poor and the cages are too small to foster much group interaction. Yet Dr. Robert Snyder, Director of the Penrose Laboratory, believed that some aspects of the social group should and could be reconstructed. He especially stressed the importance of a close mother/infant relationship. Each animal was placed with a surrogate mother (a zoo keeper) who remained with the gorilla seven days a week for three years. All of the gorillas also ate and played together in their early years under the guidance of animal specialists.

Currently the gorillas are in a stage of intermittent experimental progress. A new primate center, designed by the Philadelphia firm, Venturi, Rauch and Scott Brown, is under construction and should be finished by 1986. It is hoped that the new facility will enable the gorillas, Justin and Jessie included, to form a gorilla nucleus and to interact with each other even more closely.

Snickers holds her newborn baby Justin



Photo by the Philadelphia Daily News