WELCOME!

By Jeremy Goodman, DVM
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Autumn is truly one of the most wonderful seasons of the year. The cool crisp air and beautiful fall leaves delight the senses. In Rhode Island one of the joys of the season is Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular presented by Citizens Bank at Roger Williams Park Zoo.

For over thirty years Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular has awed guests with its artistry. Ever wonder what goes on behind-the-scenes while guests are on the trail witnessing all those glorious pumpkins?

Long before visitors arrive for the Spectacular in October, planning for Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular begins. As a new year dawns most Zoo projects are designed to co-exist with the work that the Passion for Pumpkins folks undertake at the end of August through mid-November. While most New Englanders are shoveling snow and then eagerly awaiting the spring and summer, the teams at the Zoo and Passion for Pumpkins are discussing the autumn show.

Roger Williams Park Zoo is open year-round, and so the needs of our animals are of the highest priority as Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular staff discuss special effects, themes and construction. Many of the animals are inside presents.

In a world where climate change is real, the rainforest is burning, the Endangered Species Act is being weakened, and species are being poached to extinction, it is all too easy to throw your arms up in exasperation and give up. Fortunately, the situation is not hopeless and there are things that everyone can do to help improve the environment and mitigate some of the effects of climate devastation. Rainforests are being cleared and burned for two primary reasons, to produce soy crops to feed cattle and to produce palm oil. Both practices provide income for those living and working in the Amazonian rainforests. There are ways to ensure residents in South America don’t lose their income and conserve the environment. We all have choices to make in our daily lives. By choosing to purchase sustainably grown products you can make a difference. Here in New England if you purchase meat, please buy and eat locally sourced grass-fed beef. Everyone should take a look at products purchased and strive to only use products that do not contain palm oil or are made with sustainably sourced palm oil. With decreased demand comes decreased financial incentives for people to practice these harmful actions and will instead urge farmers and ranchers to undertake sustainable practices. Your Zoo is a leader in the field of conservation and saving animals. With every membership bought and every ticket purchased you are helping to support our advocacy work and important endeavors around the globe. We cannot do it alone and we need your help. By making choices that do not harm the rainforest, as well as choices that support sustainable initiatives, we can all work together to make the world a better place to live. For a list of ways, you can help, click here rwpzoo.org/take-action.

I look forward to seeing you at the Zoo!
their habitats, and all the exhibits are closed each night of the show. Sometimes on the warmer October evenings, the elephants may be out in the yard as visitors walk by on their way to the pumpkin trail.

Construction on the trail begins in August. As the Passion for Pumpkins team prepares the trail, the Zoo team works together to make sure from the time a patron drives into the lot, parks the car, walks to the admissions booth, buys a snack or beverage and gets onto the trail — everything goes smoothly. New Englanders have long memories, and many folks remember waiting in-line for hours. That doesn’t happen anymore. With timed ticketing on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings guests come at a specific time, lines are quick, and everyone moves along. And the Zoo is right off Route 95 so access to the parking lots is easy.

Additionally, there are about 70 staff throughout the Zoo making sure everyone has a safe and enjoyable evening. Those behind-the-scenes people you don’t see include food service, volunteers, building & grounds, security, Zoo staff, and the Passion the Pumpkins folks making sure things on the trail are running smoothly.

The Halloween season does have to end, and there are thousands of pumpkins everywhere. Almost all the pumpkins are sent to compost. Pumpkins not treated sometimes go to the animals as a special treat. FYI — pumpkins are very nutritious - high in fiber, low in calories and tasty.

This year from October 3 – November 3, New Englanders can revel in a trip through a seasonal wonderland and celebrate the joys of the region. Guests from all over the world will feast their senses on autumn’s beauty, winter’s swirling snow, spring’s first blossoms and summer’s ocean breezes intricately carved on thousands of pumpkins displayed along the Zoo’s beautiful Wetlands Trail complete with music and special effects. Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular also includes festive Family Fun Nights, the Soaring Eagle Zip Ride and sensory friendly nights that should not be missed.

So, as you enter the seasonal wonderland this year, remember there are lots of folks behind the scenes ensuring your experience is magical.
WE’RE wild ABOUT BABIES!

GIANT ANTEATER

BREAKING NEWS: Our Zoo family has gotten even bigger, with a giant addition to the Faces of the Rainforest exhibit. On September 4th, proud parents Delilah and Mochila brought a baby giant anteater into the world.

The giant anteater, native to Central and South America, is known for its long, thin snout, bushy tail, and distinctive, shaggy black and grey fur.

Anteater pups generally don’t leave their mother’s side until up to a year after birth. Delilah’s pup will spend most of its time either tucked under mom’s front legs while she rests or hitching a ride on her back.

In the wild, anteaters are generally solitary, and males have no role in raising or rearing offspring. While Delilah raises her baby, Mochila will be kept separate with private access to the outdoor exhibit and an indoor space of his own.

Due to several threats including hunting and habitat destruction, giant anteaters in the wild are considered vulnerable by conservation experts.

Ask a Faces of the Rainforest keeper what you can do today to help preserve the rainforests that giant anteaters and countless other species call home!

FUN FACT
A giant anteater’s tongue is 2 feet long and looks like a worm! When eating, an anteater will move its tongue up to 150 times per minute, slurping up 35,000 ants per day!

DID YOU KNOW?
The giant anteater uses its large, powerful claws to tear open termite nests and anthills, and also as weapons when threatened

BINTURONG

The World of Adaptations’ baby binturongs are back together and better than ever. This Southeast Asian mammal, vulnerable in the wild due to habitat destruction and hunting, first arrived at the Zoo in 2017.

Back in March, our binturongs Ricky and Poppy became the proud parents of a trio of babies: Thistle, Nettle, and Bramble.

FUN FACT
Also known as “bearcats”, binturongs have great balance. They can walk along a wire as thin as a pencil!
PREHENSILE-TAILED PORCUPINE:

The Greenhouse’s newest Zoo baby is also our prickliest!

On July 15th, a brand new prehensile-tailed porcupine was born to parents Pierre and Flora. The prehensile-tailed porcupine is named after the long tail which aids them in climbing. Roughly 50% of the tail’s mass is made up of solid muscle, and there is a callus pad located near the tip that helps the porcupines grasp tree branches.

Although born with a coat of coarse red hair, as our baby porcupine continues to grow, the hairs will thicken and fill out into the distinctive sharp, stiff spikes known as quills.

Contrary to popular belief, porcupines can’t “shoot” their quills. When alarmed, a porcupine will raise their quills, by contracting their skin. The quills are barbed, and because they easily fall out when they are raised, it is very difficult for any animal to touch them without getting one embedded in its skin.

Several detached quills have been collected and sent out for DNA testing. This will allow zookeepers to determine the sex of the baby.

In the meantime, the young porcupine is spending time in the greenhouse snacking on sweet treats like bananas!

Did You Know?

A group of porcupines is called a “family” or a “prickle.”

Did You Know?

Binturongs mark their territory and attract mates with a pungent substance produced by their scent glands that smells like hot buttered popcorn!
DiD you know?

Agoutis are one of the few rainforest dwellers with a bite strong enough to crack the tough shell of the brazil nut.

**WHITE FACED SAKI MONKEY**

When we last checked in with the white-faced saki monkey family, baby Luke (born on December 24, 2018) was still clinging to his mother Suni’s back as she carried him around their Faces of the Rainforest home.

Now, Luke is a lively and energetic member of the family, leaping playfully from branch to branch with his sister Gigi and baby howler monkey Ryder.

Luke has even grown bold and mischievous enough to sometimes steal food from the adult howler monkeys that share the exhibit!

Our newest monkey has a few years of growing left to do until he’s as large as his father Gaugin, so it’s important he continues to eat a nourishing diet.

Luke enjoys primate chow, peanuts, sweet potatoes, eggs, bananas, corn on the cob, pears, string beans, carrots, peppers, oranges, grapes, squash, cucumbers, celery, and meal worms to keep his energy up for all his daily jumping and climbing.

**RED-RUMPED AGOUTI**

This past Spring, we welcomed a brand-new pair of male agoutis into our Zoo family!

Axl and Jagger, both born on April 25, have joined their older brother Gunnar in the Faces of the Rainforest exhibit.

For those unfamiliar with this burrowing rodent, the agouti, related to the guinea pig, is native to the forests, brush, and savannahs of Central and South America. Agoutis move quickly on their long legs, and through their natural diet including seeds, nuts, and fruits. The animal is an essential part of dispersing plant seeds throughout the ecosystem.

Currently, the trio of brothers are the only agoutis on display in the mixed species exhibit, sharing the spotlight with Frankie the tamandua and Kazoo the toucan.

Here at the Zoo, the young agoutis are already eating a healthy adult diet consisting of apples, bananas, carrots, sweet potatoes and rodent chow.

Come visit Axl, Jagger, and Gunnar in the Faces of the Rainforest exhibit!

**FUN FACT**

The agouti’s coarse coat of hair is covered with an oily (and stinky!) substance that acts like a natural raincoat.

**FUN FACT**

Also known as “flying monkeys,” saki monkeys can leap up to 30 feet between branches.

**DiD you know?**

All Saki monkeys are born with brown fur. While females’ fur remains brown, over time the male monkeys’ fur changes to black with a distinctive white facial coloring.
**HONORING SABU AND MALIHA**

International Snow Leopard Day is Wednesday, October 23. At Roger Williams Park Zoo, we will be celebrating Sabu and Maliha, two beautiful snow leopards, on the Marco Polo Trail. The first International Snow Leopard Day took place on October 23, 2014 and was initiated by the countries that encompass the snow leopard’s range including Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. On October 23, 2013, representatives from these countries signed the Bishkek Declaration on the conservation of the snow leopard at the First Global Snow Leopard Forum that took place in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan.

The purpose of International Snow Leopard Day is to raise awareness of the importance of snow leopard conservation, consolidate effort of environmental organizations in the countries of the snow leopard range, and emphasize the importance of taking measures to prevent poaching and illegal trade, loss of habitat and prey, as well as conflicts with people. According to the Snow Leopard Trust (snowleopard.org/the-threats) there may be as few as 3920 snow leopards in the wild, and no more than 6390. According to the organization between 2008 and 2016 one or more snow leopards were reportedly killed and traded every day. The true extent of the problem is thought to be even bigger because the trade with snow leopard parts happens in the dark, and data is hard to verify. Thankfully, snow leopards living in zoos around the world total between 600 - 700.

Snow leopards are experts at navigating Central Asia’s high mountains, and recognizable by the long tail and almost white coat, spotted with large black rosettes – a pattern unique to each individual snow leopard. The animal’s large, fur-covered forepaws help them travel on rocky surfaces and avoid sinking into the snow. Snow leopards prefer to inhabit steep cliff areas, rocky outcrops and ravines. Such habitats provide them with the camouflage they need to ambush unsuspecting prey. The snow leopards’ favored prey are herbivores, such as blue sheep, Argali sheep and ibex. When stalking their prey, they may spring from a distance of 20 - 50 feet. Their long and powerful hind limbs help snow leopards leap up to 30 feet, which is six times their body length. Mostly active at dawn and dusk, snow leopards are rarely seen in the wild. Unlike other big cats, snow leopards are unable to roar. Solitary in nature, they pair only during the breeding season January through March.
Sloths are known for spending their days hanging from the trees and branches of their rainforest homes. These sloths, made from cardboard and clothespins, can hang out all around the house!

**What you need:**
- Cardboard
- Clothespins
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers / Colored Pencils

**Follow these easy steps:**
1. Sketch out a shape for the body and head of your sloth on a piece of cardboard.
2. Using scissors, carefully cut on the lines.
3. Use markers to decorate your sloth. Make it unique! And don’t forget to decorate the clothespins with claws!
4. Using glue, attach the clothespins to the body of your sloth.

**Try this:**
- Clip together multiple sloths to create a whole family! Use the clothespins to hang them wherever you please!
- Make this an eco-friendly project by creating your own sloth family out of waste/recycled cardboard.

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**WILD TRIVIA**

Some animals have names for their young ones that can sometimes sound silly! Can you answer the following trivia about the names for different animal babies?

1. Baby kangaroos are referred to as _____
   a. Jimmies c. Bobbies
   b. Rickys d. Joeys

2. What is the term used to describe a baby crocodile?
   a. Polliwog c. Shoat
   b. Hatchling d. Crocokid

3. A young fox is known as a _____
   a. Kit c. Cub
   b. Kid d. Pup

4. A baby echidna is called a _____
   a. Plop c. Puggle
   b. Poppin d. Plush

*Answers located on bottom of page.*

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**GUESS ZOO?**

These photos show close-up views of young members of all different species. Can you identify what’s in each picture?

*Answers located on bottom of page.*
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