

For UNCW alumna, her job is a zoo

For most people in North Carolina, Africa's only a few hours away. Gazelles, nyalas, gemsbok, and sitatungas roam the Serengeti-like plains. Crown Victoria pigeons, African spoonbills, and scarlet ibis take flight in the lush tropical forest. Some 700 animals and 13,000 exotic plants inhabit a wild and wonderful environment on Purgatory Mountain in the Uwharrie mountain range. This habitat is known as the North Carolina Zoological Park near Asheboro, N.C.

"It's a fun, beautiful, and fascinating place to work and visit," said Greta Lint, visitor relations coordinator for the zoo and a 1979 graduate of UNCW. Lint is responsible for

Lint, a communications major, brings a background in television production and direction as well as radio sales to her position at the zoo. She also has experience in newspaper reporting. This experience, along with her duties with the Red Cross and the Division of Forestry, provides the skills to be effective in her job.

"I'm using a lot of my interests, skills and degree with this job," she said. "I think back on my communication classes at UNCW. I pull from them on a daily basis."

The North Carolina Zoo's main purpose is to provide education, recreation and research, as well as conservation, preservation and propagation of animal and plant life.

"The zoo makes learning fun by showing animals in their natural habitat," Lint noted. The zoo also staffs docents or volunteer teachers who educate visitors about the animals' behaviors, diets and habitats, she said.

The zoo's lack of obstructive barriers and its quiet spaciousness offer both animals and visitors a welcome retreat. "When the pressure gets to me I go down into the park and watch the giraffes eat," Lint said. "They exude so much peace. If you watch them for five minutes, you're ready to tackle anything." To be a part of this natural beauty is a special form of recreation, according to Lint.

Asked how she contributes to the zoo's success, Lint replied, "My initial goal is to develop the group sales program. Above and beyond that, my goal is to grow with the zoo." Lint hopes that the N.C. Zoo will one day have a status similar to the San Diego Zoo.

The wide variety of professionals employed by the zoo also make their contributions. "We have a great group of people here," Lint observed. "We have biologists, horticulturists, ornithologists, sculptors, dieticians, clerks, maintenance and security personnel, to name



Greta Lint, visitor relations coordinator for the North Carolina Zoo.

a few." She added that there are 148 full-time employees and 127 seasonal part-time employees.

Lint likes her job for many reasons. "The zoo is a wonderful product. It's unique. I believe in the fun and the education the zoo has to offer."

"I enjoy my job because it allows me to be me," she continued. "It allows me to do things I want to do. The zoo has given me the chance to sink myself into a career and I love it. They tell me it shows."

— Allison Norment

(Photos courtesy of N.C. Zoo design staff)



Chimpanzee

organizing group tours of the zoo. She also coordinates workshops and conferences and promotes the zoo among regional chambers of commerce and visitors bureaus.

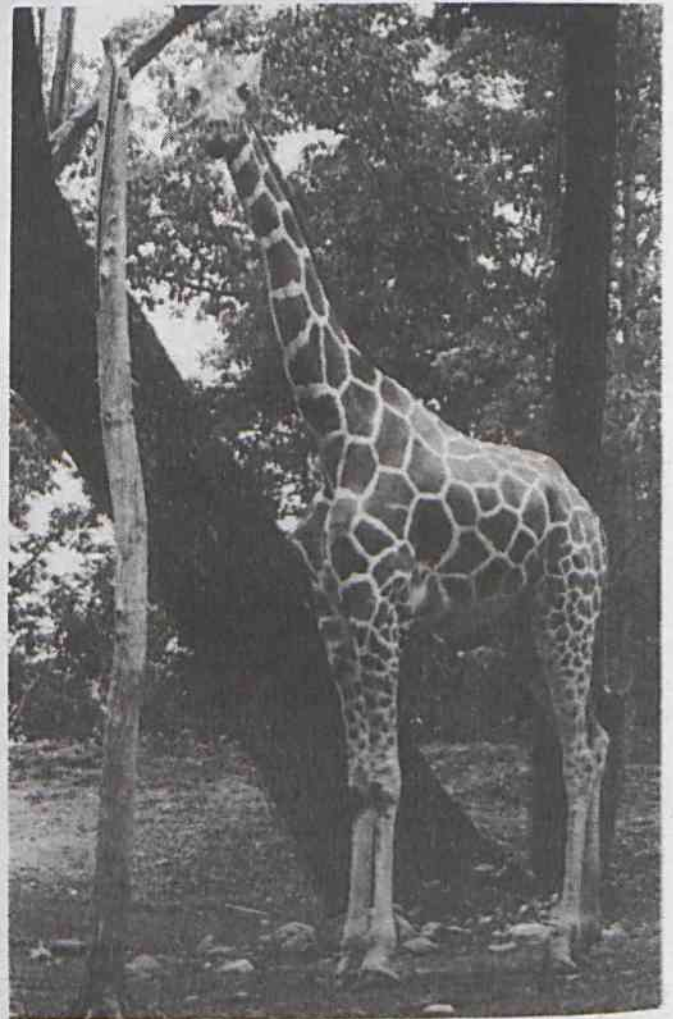
"We're one of the largest zoos in the world in terms of land mass," Lint said. The zoo is comprised of 1400 acres. "We're also a natural habitat zoo (no cages) and are open every day of the year."

Located in the geographic center of the state, the North Carolina Zoological Park had its beginnings in December 1968. It was designed to display plants and animals in environments comparable to those of their natural habitat. These environments represent seven geographic areas of the world. "Africa" was the first to be completed.

"The North America region is scheduled for completion in 1991," said Lint. "It will virtually double the size of the zoo and will include a contact area or petting zoo." Other habitats will include the plants and animals of Europe, Asia, Australia, South America, and the sea.



Cape hartebeest



Reticulated giraffe