

Spotlight

Pittsboro group strives to prevent carnivore extinction

By LISA ANTONUCCI
Staff Writer

The Carnivore Preservation Trust (CPT) in Pittsboro is a modern-day Noah's Ark.

Caracals, binterongs and grisons — not to mention servals, ocelots and civets — are just some of the 20 species of carnivores found at the trust, which breeds endangered animals that later will be released in the wild.

Twenty-one tigers now make their home at the trust — along with leopards, jaguars and more than 100 other exotic carnivores.

The trust, which began with 70 acres and one tiger in 1968, was created by Michael Bleyman, a former associate professor of biology at UNC. It has been organized in its present form since 1981.

"We are a non-profit charity organization," said Kay Reames, Bleyman's co-worker. "CPT is devoted to sustaining breeding populations of either rare or endangered Third World animals."

Various expeditions are made to obtain at least seven pairs of animals of a given species, Reames said. The trust then breeds these animals to produce the most diverse gene pool possible. The offspring are genetically sound animals that will survive in the wild.

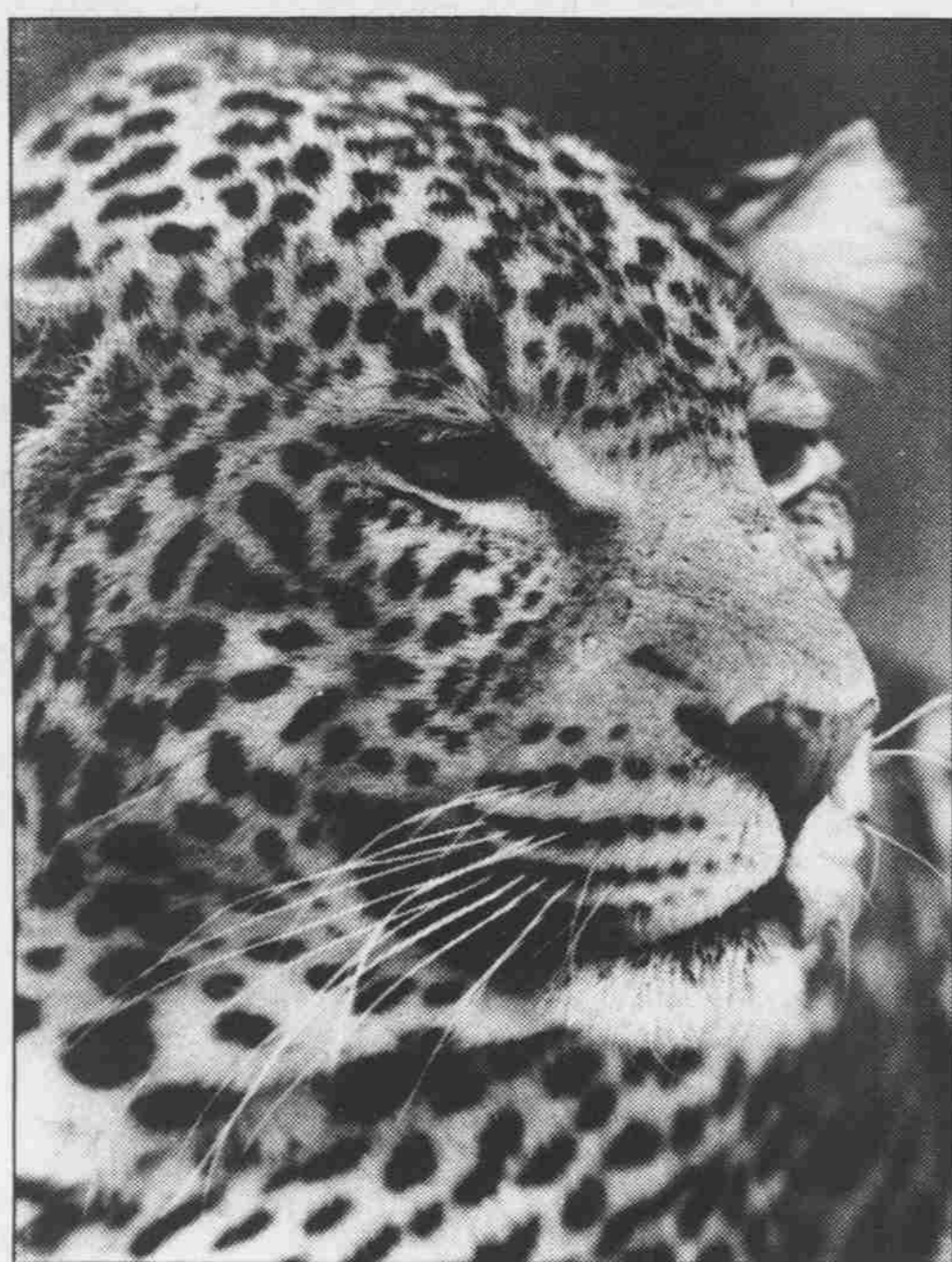
Eventually, by working with the governments of developing countries, an agreement can be made whereby the animals and their offspring will be held in trust until their habitats are stabilized and a realistic reintroduction to a safe environment is possible.

"We do not own these animals and they are not pets. They do not become domesticated," Reames said.

More than 120 animals are kept in large cages filled with vegetation and shade houses. Only small nameplates indicate the types of creatures within the enclosure.

The trust has set the world's record in breeding two endangered African cats — the serval and the caracal — and has set the American record for breeding tigers, according to a statement by representatives of the trust.

There are stories behind the endangered status of several species.



DTH/Evan Eile

This Moroccan barbary leopard will soon face extinction

Animals like the Asian binterongs were thought to be aporhidiacs while "tiger wine" was supposedly good for the skin and general health.

Perhaps the saddest story at the trust concerns three Moroccan barbary leopards. They are the last three on earth and are sisters.

But Bleyman remains optimistic. "If I don't succeed at any of my other goals, I can look at the saving of the serval and the caracal."

The trust is open to community involvement through its volunteer and HEART (Help Endangered Animals Re-establish Themselves) programs.

HEART allows people a chance to sponsor or adopt a carnivore already held by the trust or to assist in obtaining

animals on the group's target list. These adoptive parents can visit their animals and are informed of the animals' progress.

Just as the HEART program is essential to the care of the animals themselves, the volunteer program is the "heart" of the trust. People volunteer their labor, as well as medical and legal services, equipment and supplies.

What it all comes to is a race against the clock to help endangered animals from around the world, Reames said. This mission is reflected in a saying printed on all of the trust's literature: "When the clock stops at midnight for any species, then the heart of that species stops."

Big Buddy program offers friendship, role models

By CHERYL ALLEN
Staff Writer

Giggling and out of breath, 7-year-old Jamie St. John dashed to the Old Well a few paces in front of her Big Buddy, UNC sophomore Christina Nifong.

The two have been "buddies" for a year now as part of Campus Y's Big Buddy Program, and both say they're having a ball.

"I like having a Big Buddy because you don't have to go places with your sisters and brothers," said St. John, a second-grader at Carrboro Elementary School. Going places with someone other than her mother is another advantage, she said.

"We go get ice cream, we play in the park, we go swimming, we play Chinese checkers, we play with puppets, we go roller skating, we read books and we make up rhymes," Nifong said. "I love to see her and to watch her grow and change."

The Big Buddy Program provides local elementary school children of various economic and social backgrounds the opportunity to spend time with UNC students. The Big Buddy serves as both friend and role model to the youngster.

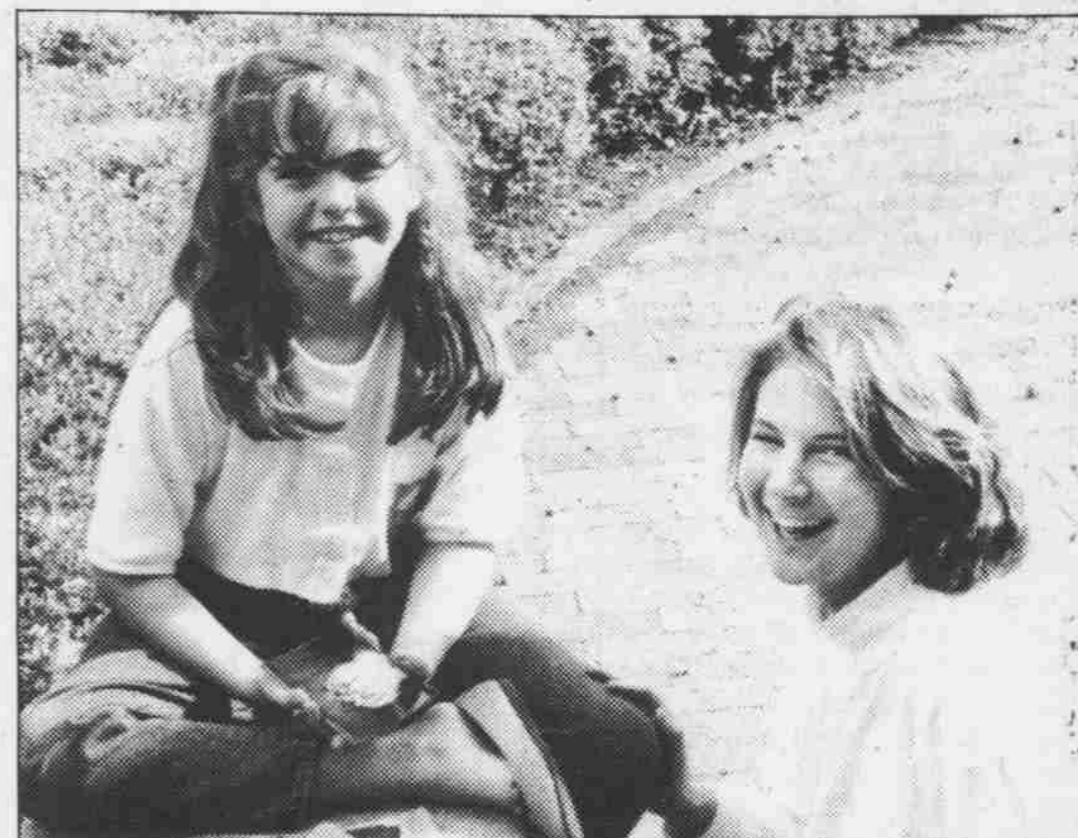
University students are chosen through an application and interview process and are then paired with children from six local elementary schools. Guidance counselors have determined that these children are needy in some way, said Cathy Bryson, a senior tri-chairperson for the program.

"The children are not necessarily underprivileged," said Katy Crum, another senior tri-chairperson. "We ask the schools to pick the 25 children with the greatest need for special attention."

According to Betty Harris, a guidance counselor at Glenwood Elementary School, the school refers children through recommendations by teachers and parents for those in need of companionship and a role model.

Often the children in the program are from single-parent families or families with many children, where parents don't have much time to spend with them, said Lauren Burgess, another senior tri-chairperson.

The program, which consists of some 150 pairs of buddies, requires students to make a year-long commitment to see



DTH/Kathy Michel

Jamie St. John, left, and Christina Nifong share time on campus

their Little Buddy for a minimum of two hours each week, Bryson said. The two hours are spent both one-on-one and in activities sponsored by group leaders.

"There are 12 group leaders under three tri-chairs," said Nifong, a group leader. The groups separate the children by ages.

Leaders have programs about once a month, giving the Big Buddies and the Little Buddies a chance to interact, she said. "We sponsor programs that couldn't be done in pairs." Group leaders also are available if there are any problems between the Big Buddy and the Little Buddy.

According to Burgess, problems are rare, but occasionally the Big Buddy and Little Buddy will have a hard time relating.

"Most things work out if they give it enough time," Crum said. Harris said there were many more children who wanted a Big Buddy than there were Big Buddy volunteers. "The Big Buddy Program enjoys a wide popularity, and we would like to see it larger than it is."

"We get parents calling and begging for their child to have a Big Buddy," Bryson said.

Despite some initially shy Little Buddies, the Big Buddy Program has had profound effects on the children and University students involved.

Burgess has two Little Buddies, Joey and Omar Shaw, 6- and 7-year-old brothers. "They are a lot less shy now; the ice is definitely broken."

"My Little Buddy, Andrea, is getting a lot more self-confidence," Bryson said. Andrea seems more outgoing after being involved in the Big Buddy Program, she said.

One of the changes Crum noticed is that her Little Buddy now has things in mind that she wants to do when they get together. "She likes to rub it in that she can cook better than I can."

In addition to the relationship that develops, students get the chance to see things from a child's perspective, Burgess said. Coloring, playing on the swings and jumping in leaf piles can be a release for some of the stress created during school.

"It gives you time to relate to someone younger," she said.

Crum said she appreciates the innocence of youth. "Kids are really honest, and that's neat to see."

Displays honor N.C. artist who turned child's play into art form

By BEVIN WEEKS
Staff Writer

A small child carefully runs his fingers over a sheet of paper, smearing red and blue with streaks of green in lines, dots and swirls.

Finger painting is simply an afternoon activity to him, but to one North Carolina woman, it was the discovery of a lifetime.

Kenansville native Ruth Faison Shaw is credited with the development of finger painting as a modern art form.

Shaw would have been 100 years old on Oct. 15, and the Ruth Faison Shaw Memorial Committee is displaying her finger paintings on the UNC campus and throughout Orange County as part of the celebration.

Reproductions of Shaw's finger paintings will be exhibited at 50 locations through mid-November. The Campus Y, Wilson Library, the Student Union and North Carolina Memorial Hospital are included in the campus displays.

According to Martha Whittinghill, chairman of the committee, Shaw's incentive to develop finger painting came from an experience she had while

teaching in an English-speaking primary school in Rome.

One of her students cut himself, and Shaw sent him to the bathroom to put iodine on the cut. When the boy didn't return, Shaw went to investigate. The other children followed, and when they reached the bathroom, they found the student making iodine pictures all over the walls.

All the children were instantly attracted to the new "art form" and wanted to try it. Whittinghill said that Shaw recognized that children had an innate desire to "smear," and she set about finding a way they could do so safely.

Shaw realized how constrained a child was when he had to hold a brush a certain way or had to sharpen his pencil, and she sought to create a way for them to visually express themselves without restraints, Whittinghill said.

"She wanted the children to paint what pleased them ... what they were feeling and what they thought."

To be certain of a high level of safety in finger painting, Shaw carefully researched colors and paints to avoid any toxicity. She used earth pigments that were free from toxins, Whittinghill said.

After Shaw developed colors that would be safe for her students to use, she and her students produced the first modern finger painting, "The Open Door," in 1930. UNC has owned the original work since 1972, when it was donated to the University. It is part of the permanent Finger Painting Collection of Ruth Faison Shaw.

Shaw demonstrated and lectured on finger painting throughout Europe, receiving wide acclaim and recognition. She returned to America to protect her patent because, according to Whittinghill, people were manufacturing "unsafe" media and marketing them as fingerpaints.

Shaw was also a pioneer in the field of art therapy. "She found she could take a patient and tell what was bothering him by what he painted," Whittinghill said. She worked in this discipline at the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kan., and later returned to NCMH.

Reproductions on display this fall at the hospital will be located on the same corridor where Shaw used to hang her patients' work.

"That is a very symbolic location because of the history of finger paintings hanging there," Whittinghill said.



Ruth Faison Shaw exhibits one of her finger paintings

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