Introducing the new face of Cat-Tales, The Big Cat Times!

Big Cat Rescue is excited to be able to produce our quarterly updates in this new format which allows us to bring you color photos of the cats for pennies more than our previous publication.

We would love to hear your feedback on the new look. Send us a note or an email. Enjoy!

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RESCUED TIGER FINDS A HOME AT BCR

Snorkel was born in 1996 to the same abuser who bred Nakoma the lion. She breeds lions and tigers and uses them to make money by selling you a photo of you holding a cute little cub. Typically these cubs are starved, deprived of bone building calcium and even poisoned to give them constant diarrhea so that they cannot gain weight. They do this because the cubs are only profitable while they are small. Once they reach 45 pounds they cannot be touched by the public, according to FL state law, and then they are discarded. Snorkel was given to a small family operated circus when he exceeded 45 pounds at the age of 6 months but because he had been so deprived of nutrition he was very tiny and stands on little stunted legs. The other bigger circus tigers beat him up and one bit him across the nose so severely that when he chuffs it sounds like he is drowning, thus his name. He has never had soft grass to roll in nor a pool or mountain cave to call his own before coming to Big Cat Rescue. He has been one of the happiest tigers we have ever rescued. Help us put a stop to the barbaric practices that enable people to ruin the lives of these magnificent animals for a few dollars here: http://capwiz.com/bigcatrescue/issues/alert/?alertid=6794751&type=ME

Above: Snorkel rests after tossing around his favorite new toy. Left: Not afraid to dive right in, Snorkel thrashes around in his pond.

All of Big Cat Rescue’s Tigers have access to ponds to play in or just to cool off in on those hot summer days. Tigers are one of the few cats that actually enjoy the water.
“TEE UP FOR TIGERS” at the BIG CAT RESCUE GOLF TOURNAMENT


Girl Scout Troop 608 and Big Cat Rescue have joined forces to educate students all over the country about big cats facing extinction and how we can reduce the number that are abused and abandoned. The project involves sending to thousands of schools a DVD produced by Big Cat Rescue along with workbook materials the girl scouts design. The project will allow the scouts to apply for their Gold Award, the highest award level in scouting. To fund this project as well as the ongoing care of our cats, we will be holding the First Annual Big Cat Rescue Golf Tournament.

Details, Registration and Sponsor Information are below. Come on out and tee up for a great cause!

DATE: May 1, 2005
TIME: 11:45 AM Registration and Range Open
1:00 PM Shotgun Start - Scramble Format
PLACE: Beautiful Lansbrook Golf Club (see www.Lansbrook-Golf.com)

ENTRY FEE: Foursome $400
Individual $100

INCLUDES:
- Greens Fee and Cart
- Commemorative Pullover Windbreaker with Detachable Sleeves
- Two free passes for Day Tour at Big Cat Rescue (value $40)
- $50 coupon for merchandise at Steve’s World of Golf
- Coupon for a Foursome at Lansbrook at future date for cart fee only
- Neck/shoulder massage courtesy Le Camelot Day Spa
- Pre Tournament Snacks
- 3 Free Beer/Soda coupons
- Awards dinner

PRIZES FOR: First Place, Second Place, Third Place, Longest Drive, Straightest Drive, Closest to Pin, Hole in One, Putting Contest.

PLUS MANY RAFFLE PRIZES AND SILENT AUCTION BARGAINS

TO REGISTER:
Online: Visit www.BigCatRescue.org/golf.htm
By Fax: Complete the form on back or attached and fax to 813-885-4457
By Mail: Send form to Howard Baskin, 7106 Riverwood Blvd., Tampa FL 33615-2031
By Phone: Call Howard Baskin at 813-889-7244

QUESTIONS? Email Golf@BigCatRescue.org

WANT TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS TO A GREAT DEMOGRAPHIC WHILE SUPPORTING A WONDERFUL CAUSE?

Please consider donating an item for our raffles, contests, silent auction, or goody bags or becoming a sponsor.

TO DONATE email Golf@BigCatRescue.org.

FOR SPONSORSHIP INFO please call Penny Danielecki at 727-638-7322

SPECIAL THANKS TO PAUL COMBS

We wish to express our sincere thanks to Paul Combs for donating the logo cartoon for our upcoming golf tournament. Paul, who is cartoonist for the Tampa Tribune, is an extremely talented artist and illustrator. His work, ranging from political cartoons to technical illustrations to logos to fabulous animal prints, can be viewed at www.artstudios-even.com. He can be contacted at combscartoons@yahoo.com. Thanks Paul!

If any problems faxing or any questions, please email Golf@BigCatRescue.org or call Howard Baskin at 813-889-7244
PLAYTIME AT BIG CAT RESCUE

Each of the Tigers at Big Cat Rescue has one of these “Indestructible Balls” in their Cat-a-tat. To keep the Tigers interested in them, they are periodically switched around so that they can investigate the scent from another Tiger. Above Auroara the Tiger plays with her ball in the lake.

Photo by LaWanna Jones

YOU CAN DONATE TO BIG CAT RESCUE AND HELP SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT BY RECYCLING YOUR PRINTER CARTRIDGES

The GreenFund Network provides postage paid envelopes and boxes for you to send them your used printer cartridges. For each cartridge of the type they recycle that you send in, GreenFund sends a donation to Big Cat Rescue. This is a great way for you to donate to help the cats as well as recycle at no cost to you!

Postage paid free shipping envelopes (and boxes for larger toner cartridges or higher volume users) can be ordered directly from the GreenFund Network website. For instructions on how to do that, just visit our website at www.BigCatRescue.org/ink.htm or email ink@BigCatRescue.org to have a Word document with instructions emailed back to you.

Thanks for participating!!

COMMISSIONER STORMS AND STAFF VISIT BIG CAT RESCUE

On February 18th we were honored to have a visit from County Commissioner Ronda Storms, staff members Audi Canney and Cindy Jones, and guests. Commissioner Storms was very supportive during the Commission discussion of our rezoning application last year, which we appreciated very much. After visiting the sanctuary, she sent the following wonderful note: “What a pleasure it was to tour your facility and to appreciate the sacrifices you and your staff have made to provide a safe haven for these impressive cats. Rarely do people have such an amazing opportunity to learn about these creatures in such an up-close environment. After our tour of Big Cat Rescue, we came away with three strong impressions I’d like to share: we were marveling at God’s creative diversity demonstrated in every one of the rescued big cats; we were saddened at the ignorance and cruelty of humanity; and we were impressed with your gracious and tender mercy to these beautiful cats. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to visit with you - we all enjoyed it!” Thank YOU, Commissioner, for your support of the sanctuary and for taking time out of your busy schedule to visit the cats.

JAGUAR OF TAMPA LARGEST DONOR IN 2004!

Big Cat Rescue would like to express special thanks to Rob Elder and Jaguar of Tampa. Jaguar of Tampa first funded the rescue of two abused jaguar cats who had been stuck in a basement and not seen sunlight for over a year. They then set up a program under which each new car purchaser receives a sponsor kit funded by the dealership containing passes to Big Cat Rescue. Proceeds from that program made Jaguar of Tampa our largest single donor in 2004! On behalf of the cats, thanks so much for your generous support!

SPECIAL THANKS TO HELEN DEAN DESIGN

Many people have asked us who did the wonderful graphics for our promotional poster with the tiger in top hat and the large sponsor recognition sign at the Fur Ball last year. We take this opportunity to thank Helen Dean so much for her contribution of those graphics. Helen has been serving local advertising agencies and businesses for over 14 years with her creative talents. She can be reached at 727.565.4153, www.HelenDean.com or hdd@tampabay.rr.com.

CAROLE BASKIN APPOINTED TO THE ANIMAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

County Commissioner Brian Blair appointed Carole Baskin to serve a 4 year term on the 10 member Animal Advisory Committee.

This Committee serves as an advisory body to assist with the refinement of general policies, shelter programs and services and the development of long range plans for the Animal Shelter and the Animal Services Department; may advise the Board Of County Commissioners and County Administration regarding revisions to the Animal Ordinance, animal related resolutions and policies concerning animals as well as other applicable matters concerning both domestic and wild animals in Hillsborough County.

STAFF TRAINING - Curators, Cathy Mayeski and Jen Rusczcyk, completed the Clicker Training Expo in CA and now have 57 of our cats in the Operant Conditioning program.
VALENTINE’S DAY WEDDING AT BIG CAT RESCUE BY THE NEW MAGIC 94-9 AND TAMPA BAY’S BEST WEDDING & PARTY PLANNER MAGAZINE MAKES DREAM COME TRUE FOR YOUNG COUPLE

Each year on Valentine’s Day The New Magic 94-9 holds a unique contest. The winners either get married or renew their vows live on The Magic Morning Show With Chadd & Kristi at an unusual venue. This year’s wedding was at Big Cat Rescue. To enter, the contestants had to submit in writing why they felt they were ready to “tame the wild beast”. The winners were a lovely young couple, Krista Lanahan & Greg Williamson of Palm Harbor.

Through The New Magic 94-9, Krista and Greg received a spa vacation at Top Notch Resort & Spa in Stowe, Vermont and a Gasparilla Mandarin Garnet ring, valued at $17,000 courtesy of Cabot Cheese of Vermont. From Big Cat Rescue they received an overnight stay in our cabins, and all day Expedition with our keepers and tours of the sanctuary for the entire wedding party.

What made the ceremony itself particularly spectacular this year was the new participation by Tampa Bay’s Best Wedding & Party Planner magazine. There is nobody better connected in the wedding and party community than Greg Snow, Publisher. Greg arranged, at no cost to the young couple, for the beautiful wedding gown, the tuxedo, the flowers, the make-up and hair, photography and video, champagne, and a limousine to take the lucky couple to a romantic lunch after the morning ceremony. In addition, the couple and Big Cat Rescue will be featured on the cover of the next issue!

The Magic Morning Show With Chadd & Kristi broadcasts from 5am to 9am. This made for an unusually early start for sanctuary staff, who arrived at 3am to assist the technical crew in setting up. At left, Chadd talks at the broadcast booth with Guest Celebrity Mary Delgado from The Bachelor and Russell Rhodes, Reporting from Fox 13 Television. During the morning newscast Fox 13 News broke repeatedly as he covered the ceremony live.

With the wedding to be performed on air exactly at 8:15, nerves were frayed as those assisting the bride hurried frantically with last minute preparations. But to the relief of all, she got to the beach just in time for her proud smiling dad to escort her down the aisle.

The ceremony itself was performed by recently anointed notary public Chadd Thomas, his first official act as a notary. Even our tiger Aurora, who watched from her enclosure behind the broadcast booth, seemed to cry at the emotional moment when the couple said “I do”. For more photos of the wedding, visit BigCatRescue.org/weddings.htm.

Big Cat Rescue is enormously grateful for the media coverage from The New Magic 94-9, Fox 13, and Tampa Bay’s Best Wedding & Party Planner magazine. The awareness of the sanctuary created by this kind of coverage plays a critical role in drawing visitors who both help support the cats financially and who become “AdvoCats” of protecting the cats through what they learn at the sanctuary.

Our deepest thanks to:

- Julia Freeman and Chadd & Kristi Thomas from the Magic Morning Show, plus all of our friends at The New Magic 94-9
- Russell Rhodes from TV Channel Fox 13
- Greg Snow from Tampa Bay’s Best Wedding & Party Planner magazine and all

of the wonderful vendors listed below who, through their relationship with Greg, provided their expert services and talents to make the wedding so special:

Wedding Gown and Veil: Athena’s Bridal Boutique (727) 461-0225
Tuxedo: Tuxedo Junction (727) 792-5290
Bride’s Hair: Sandra Chandler of MLD III Salon (727) 796-0555
Bride’s Make-up: Nelda Corbett of MLD III Salon (727) 796-0555
Photographer: Bill Cadzow/Lawrence & Associates Photography (727) 549-8974
Videographer: Vance Hohenthaner/V.H. Video Productions (813) 996-6387
Flowers: Unique Weddings & Floral Events (727) 937-6387
Champagne: Freixenet
Limousine: Royal Limousine & Entertainment Services (813) 288-9225
Lunch: The Rusty Pelican Restaurant & Banquet Halls (813) 281-1943

In addition to the quarterly publication, Tampa Bay’s Best Wedding & Party Planner magazine holds an Extravaganza Show each month at a different location in the Tampa Bay area. Over the past 15 year the shows have helped over 300,000 brides and grooms “to be” make their weddings as special and perfect as they can be. The Valentine’s Day Wedding at Big Cat Rescue will appear on the cover of the Summer issue out in June. It will be available on a complimentary basis at the Extravaganza shows or for $4.50 at newsstands. For more information about the magazine or the shows, visit www.tampabaysbest.net or call (813) 249-9000.

The Big Cat Picture, a film created by Big Cat Rescue, on the plight of exotic cats in captivity as well as in the wild, has been entered into the 28th International Wildlife Film Festival. The festival, which will be held from April 30th - May 7th, will foster forward and innovative thinking on ways for media to impact conservation efforts on both a local and global level.

To purchase The Big Cat Picture see page 6.
Project Catter-wall
Anonymous $10,750.00
Donald & Elizabeth Bower $160.00
Stanley Stanekewicz $160.00
TiffanyBluer $100.00
PaulaEskine $50.00
Veronika $25.00
Eileen Cecchi $80.00
MiriziaCombes $80.00
ShaneGunsteen $80.00
Jon Ohman $80.00
Mary Phillips $80.00
SheriKosmo $80.00
KerrinRollins $80.00
Gail & Frank Stegner $80.00
RobiTurner $80.00
Donations $1000 - $2850
Cyrus & Joanne Spurlino $2000.00
Mary Lou Johnson $75.00
Paul Jensen $75.00
Alexa Jasenof $50.00
Phyllis Hunt $50.00
Talitha Hostler $50.00
Jeff Hinchee $50.00
Mark Hicks $50.00
Crestonnie Harris $50.00
Kameron Hale $50.00
Robert & Janet Gobeli $50.00
Daniel Gault $50.00
Anna Maria Garcia $50.00
Cleopatra Doyle $25.00
Pearl Cole $25.00
Susane Krieser $25.00
Howard Krieser $25.00
Mel Krupa $25.00
Howard Krieser $25.00
Mel Krupa $25.00
Beth King $25.00
Virginia Kenzie $25.00
Mary Lou Johnson $25.00
Paul Jensen $25.00
Alexa Jasenof $25.00
Phyllis Hunt $25.00
Talitha Hostler $25.00
Jeff Hinchee $25.00
Mark Hicks $25.00
Crestonnie Harris $25.00
Kameron Hale $25.00
Robert & Janet Gobeli $25.00
Daniel Gault $25.00
Anna Maria Garcia $25.00
Cleopatra Doyle $25.00
Pearl Cole $25.00
Susane Krieser $25.00
Howard Krieser $25.00
Mel Krupa $25.00

Adopt A Wild Child

All of Big Cat Rescue’s animals are available for sponsorship. Sponsorship fees go directly to the care of all the animals to provide them with food, toys, enrichment, a large natural Cat-a-tat, medical and preventative care, and overall a higher standard of living. The Sponsorship Kit includes an 8x10 glossy photograph of your chosen specie, a list of all the animals we have that are the specie you chose, with a black and white photo and personal history of each one so that you can choose which one you would like to sponsor and have appear on your personalized Certificate, and most importantly your registration card that when returned will entitle you to personalized address labels and your Sponsor Certificate.
THE BIG CAT TRADING POST
Your purchases help the cats!
44 Great Gifts under $25
S&H and Tax included in all prices

I. Embroidered Field Bag
   smoke gray
   $29.75 each

J. Big Cat Rescue Mug
   black ceramic with gold logo
   $13.70 each

K. Big Cat Rescue Safari Guide
   Photo and personal history of each cat
   living on Easy Street. B&W w/ some color
   $24.40 each

L. The Big Cat Picture
   60 min. DVD or VHS featuring
   19 Species of BCR’s cats
   $24.40 each

M. Animal Planets Most Extreme Cats. VHS featuring
   Big Cat Rescue
   $24.40 each

N. BCR Documentary
   30 min. VHS filmed by students of USF
   $13.70 each

O. Big Cat Rescue Screensavers. 12 Photos each. Choose from Tigers or Leopards $13.70 each

P. Plush Tiger Purse
   zipper closure on back, hand grips, & shoulder strap
   $13.70 each

Q. Animal Plush Value Pack
   Zippered case with 10 soft wild animals
   $19.05 each

R. Hug a Big Cat
   17” plush with long arms and velcro paws, also available in tiger
   $13.70 each

S. Snow Leopard Purse
   $13.70 each

T. Big Cat Tube
   12 plastic toy big cats $11.56 each

U. Greeting Card Tins, 16 beautiful art cards, 4 of each design, matching envelopes included
   $19.05 each

V. Tiger Computer Chamois
   Tame your monitor dust
   $13.70 Shipping Included

W. Big Cat Rescue - Shere Power Poster 24”x36”
   $13.70 each

X. National Geographic Door Hanger
   Tiger or Jaguar
   $5.28 each

B. Mug $20.12 each
C. Salt & Pepper Shaker Set $23.33 each
D. Decorative Plate $20.12 each
E. Mug $20.12 each
F. Tea Light Holder $15.84 each
G. Decorative Plate $20.12 each
H. Salt & Pepper Shaker Set $23.33 each

Zoe the Leopard Collection
A. Small Bowl $20.12 each
B. Mug $20.12 each
C. Salt & Pepper Shaker Set $23.33 each
D. Decorative Plate $20.12 each

Walter the Tiger Collection
E. Mug $20.12 each
F. Tea Light Holder $15.84 each
G. Decorative Plate $20.12 each
H. Salt & Pepper Shaker Set $23.33 each
Embroidered Field Bag
Smoky Gray  $29.75 each

Big Cat Rescue Logo Hats
Q. Pith Helmet - Adjustable, Screenprinted, Tan $24.40
R. Snow Cap Beanie - Embroidered, Gray with Black Stripe $22.26
S. Flex Fit Hat - Embroidered, Olive $24.40
T. Safari Hat - Embroidered, Khaki Green or Tan $22.26
U. Visor - Adjustable, Embroidered, Light Khaki, $24.40
V. Baseball Cap - Embroidered, Khaki & Green, Khaki & Black, $13.70

W. Haunting Eyes Tees
- Black w/ Bengal Tiger, Siberian Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard, BCR logo on sleeve.
- Adult Sizes: $24.40 each

For faster delivery, place your order online at www.BigCatRescue.org or call (813) 920-4130
SHOP AT IGIVE AND BENEFIT BIG CAT RESCUE

Shop at lots of great stores, like Lands End, Barnes & Noble, eBay and Office Depot online and part of your purchase will be automatically donated to Big Cat Rescue.

HOW IGIVE WORKS: 2 Easy Steps

1. Shop through iGive.com and choose Big Cat Rescue as your charity.
2. Your iGive purchases are automatically tracked and donations are credited to Big Cat Rescue within 30 days from the day your item(s) are shipped. For reservations and airline tickets, please wait 30 days from the travel date.

Photo at Left: Nirvana the Ocelot

THE BIG CAT TIMES ORDER FORM

Date:

Date: ____________________________

BILLING ADDRESS

Name:

Address:

City St Zip

Day Time Phone

Email

RECIPIENT ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT THAN BILLING)

Name

Address

City St Zip

Day Time Phone

Email

DESCRIPTION

Yes! I want to support Project Cater-Wall and sponsor a section of the wall for $80    $  

Yes! I would like to enter ___ times to win an Expedition & Cabin Stay for 2 for $1 each or 6 for $5 $  

Yes, I would like a receipt for tax purposes  

Yes! I would like a free magnet with my order totalling more than $50  

Method of Payment

Check

Money Order

Visa

MasterCard

American Express

Discover

Signature

Exp. Date MMYY

This is a gift, please make card to: ____________________________ from: ____________________________

Brief message to say: ____________________________

Special Comment, Request or Question:

Shopping really does make a difference.

Last year Big Cat Rescue raised more than one third of the entire income of the sanctuary through Gift Shop, Membership, and Sponsorship sales, onsite, online, and through Cat-Tales. So keep up the good work and shop away!

All the proceeds from the programs and unique items Big Cat Rescue offers, go directly to the care of the animals. Florida law requires that all charities soliciting donations disclose their registration number and the percentage of your donation that actually goes to the cause and the amount that goes to the solicitor.

Our registration number is SC-11409 and 100% of your donation will go directly to the care of the animals.

VISIT BIG CAT RESCUE

Kids Tour

Big Cat Rescue now offers regularly scheduled, guided, kids tours. This is a complete guided tour where children of all ages, and their parents can get up-close and learn about exotic cats and other animals.

- Tour Time: 9:00 a.m. Saturday
- $10.00 per person (price subject to change)

Children must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian.

Day Tours

Monday - Friday 9AM & at 3PM
Saturday 9:30, 11:30, & 1:30

Tours are guided and take 1 1/2 - 2 hrs. Admission is $20 per person (price subject to change).

Reservations are not required. No children under 10 years of age. Casual attire is recommended.

Ultimate Expedition - A Big Cat Adventure

This is the most exclusive and up close program that we offer. Your all day adventure includes, the Morning Tour of the refuge, special Interaction Sessions with our friendly Lynx, Bobcats, or Caracals Big Cat training, Enrichment (making natural toys and food puzzles for the cats), Feeding (hand feed several of the Great Cats including Tigers), & Bed & Breakfast where you will be lulled to sleep by the gentle roar of Lions and Tigers!

Age Restrictions apply, Call for more info

Wild Eyes At Night Tour

Night Tours are the only way to see the animals come alive at night! As you journey through the 40 acre sanctuary you will be stalked and pounced at from the shadows! No worries though, all the animals will be safely in their enclosures. This is an adventure that’s sure to please! $20 per person. Call for reservations.

Photo Safaris

Photo Safaris are one of the most up close and personal tours we offer. A qualified guide will help you get great pictures of our animals without any fence or wire in the way. You can tour the entire sanctuary and get great pics along the way, or you can spend the entire time photographing your favorite feline. Call for prices and reservations.

Big Cat Rescue also offers:

WILD WEDDINGS
PRIVATE PARTIES
VOLUNTEER & INTERN PROGRAMS
Gift Certificates are available for all of our programs and make the perfect gift for that person who has everything!
JOIN US FOR THE 2005 FUR BALL - THE “ROARING 20’s”

Planning has already begun for the 2005 Fur Ball. The fundraising committee is working tirelessly to make sure that this year’s event tops the 2004 Fur Ball - Call of the Wild.

This year the theme is the “Roaring 20’s”. Dress will be anything from pure 1920’s costume to cat prints, or any mix.

There will be live music, live and silent auctions, a seated gourmet dinner, and much more!

Tickets are now on sale online. Be sure to pick up your tickets early this year as the event sold out to a crowd of 850 last year. This is an event that you do not want to miss out on.

Ticket Prices are $125 for General Admission, $150 for VIP Admission, and $1,500 for a reserved Table of 10.

Sponsorships at varying levels are also available for this event. Each level of sponsorship comes with different perks and exposure for your company.

Big Cat Rescue is now accepting donations towards the auctions. We are looking for dinner gift certificates, event tickets, attraction tickets, hotel and B&B stays, memorabilia, wildlife art and photography, animal themed gifts and decor, and themed gift baskets. Donors will be acknowledged in the evening’s program and on the website.

If you are interested in purchasing tickets, becoming a sponsor, or donating an item to the auction please email info@bigcatrescue.org

BIG CAT RESCUE IN THE NEWS

2/22/05 CNN’S Anderson Cooper’s 360 - Black Market America, interviewed Big Cat Rescue about the Animal Underworld

2/14/05 Russell Rhodes of Fox 13 featured our Big Cat Wedding on their morning show.

2/14/05 Cox Radio 94.9 hosted their forth annual Valentine’s Day wedding at Big Cat Rescue and gave us 100 air time mentions. The lucky couple was married on air by Chadd and Kristi and was featured on Fox 13’s Russell Rhodes segment and on the cover of Tampa Bay’s Best Wedding Planner and Magazine.

2/13/05 The Tampa Tribune gave us 800 words and the front and back page of the Commentary Section in an article Howard Baskin wrote about why big cats don’t make good pets. See the full colour version in PDF on our website.

1/30/05 The Ledger-Enquirer quoted Big Cat Rescue’s Operations Manager on why canned hunts frequently have so many exotic cats in cages for illegal killing “Most of these places advertise for deer and elk hunting or maybe some type of bighorn sheep,” said Scott Lope, manager of Big Cat Rescue animal sanctuary in Tampa, Fla. “But if you look at the bottom of the ads, you’ll see fine print that says, ‘Other species available upon request.’ That’s how they do it.”

1/19/05 The Tampa Tribune Northwest Section did a story about the legislative efforts of Big Cat Rescue called Sanctuary Owner Urges Ban on Canned Hunts.

1/12/05 The Fox 13 show Your Turn, hosted by Kathy Fountain aired a debate about the inhumane aspects of circus life for the animals. Carole Baskin and Dr. John Mead debated Lance Ramos, a circus owner.

1/6/05 The WB Channel 38 ran a story about Ring-Cleo, female African Serval

BIG CATS IN THE NEWS

February 12, 2005 Cut and Shoot, TX: Woman mauled in leopard attack at 6912 Dusty Lane at Wildlife Extravaganza, owned by Reginald “Lefty” Parr. Parr owns two leopards, a cougar, several tigers and a lion. There have been two prior incidents where cats escaped from Parr’s facility. In 1998, two tigers escaped from their cages after a trainer had left them open. Both tigers were later shot. In another incident, two cougars escaped from their cages. At that time, the animals were just housed in cages, which violates the Animal Welfare Act, she said. Following the second incident, Parr lost his exhibitor license from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He also was found guilty of several violations of the Animal Welfare Act, including constructing and maintaining housing facilities for animals that are not structurally sound and in good repair, failing to utilize a sufficient number of trained employees to maintain the prescribed level of husbandry practices and failing to establish and maintain programs of disease control and prevention, euthanasia and adequate veterinary care under the supervision and assistance of a veterinarian.

January 9, 2005 Charlotte, Kings Mountain, NC Two 75-125 pound tiger cubs were found wandering in a neighborhood full of children. These cats are banned in this area and even after the media has shown their pictures all over T.V. no one has stepped forward to claim them. One cub suffered a broken tail and the other a dislocated pelvis when they were apparently thrown from the back of a moving vehicle with electric cords tied around their necks. The cubs were separated and sent to separate animal shelters that are only equipped for dogs and cats.

December 7, 2004 COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — A rare Siberian tiger was shot and killed Tuesday after it escaped from a downtown zoo by climbing over a 16-foot electrified fence in southern Denmark.

For more details on these stories as well as additional articles visit:

http://www.bigcatrescue.org/big_cat_news.htm
CLAWS AND EFFECT

We are all guilty of the tiger’s blood unless we act now.

A nation mourns the shooting death of a tiger, an un-named tiger, who was the declawed and unwanted pet of a Californian. Perhaps I should say that WE didn’t know the tiger’s name. Most owners, even the most awful ones, usually name their pets. Someone knew the tiger’s name, but they didn’t care enough about him to come forward.

They could have told the authorities that this was a declawed animal that had never associated killing with eating. They could have called out to the disoriented, starving animal who had known only them as his providers for his whole life. They could have provided valuable insight into the animal’s habits and possibly coaxed the animal into a familiar transport. After nine days of being lost and hungry he might have given up his freedom for security. They could have pled for his life. Could a sharp shooter pull the trigger so quickly if they knew the cat’s name or knew that there was some tearful owner standing by who would take him home?

The owners could have been fined $500.00 for the escape and saving the money and saving their reputation was more important to them than saving the cat they had bottle raised from a cub. Who would support them with their donations if they knew that the sanctuary owners had released a big cat because they didn’t want him any more? Coming forward would have been bad for business and in most cases that is all it means to exotic owners; a way to get paid to play with dangerous animals that most people aren’t allowed to have. It is an industry of greed and ego masked as a charity in which no one knows exactly how many, nor where they are. There are no where to be found.

More than 10,000 tigers are thought to be in the hands of private owners across our country. No one knows exactly how many, nor where they are because there is very little regulation requiring notification. They often hail themselves as rescuers and heroes and educators, but when they fall on hard times the animals pay the price. In this case, the ultimate price.

Even in the best of circumstances these captive animals are paying a price that is far too high. They are born and bred for life in cages, so that we can thrill at their beauty and majesty. They live out 10-20 years of abject boredom, confined to areas that amount to little more than a jail cell; all for crimes that they never committed.

This tiger died free.

We are a nation of people who were rallied to action by the words, “Give me liberty or give me death!” Over the centuries we have fought for and killed for freedom. It is so important to us that we invade other countries and fight for their freedom as well. Our deterrent to crime is a sentence of confinement. When it is imposed on humans we call it jail, when we impose it on animals we call it a zoo, a sanctuary, a cage, an ark for the future but by whatever name you call it, the fact remains that it is imposed deprivation. We do this to animals that we proclaim to love.

Imagine what it might have been like to be this tiger: You have spent your entire life in a 10 foot square room that is barren and devoid of any plant life because you are so enormous, in such a small area, as to crush the life out of every blade of grass. Your water dish is covered in a layer of scum in the summer or a layer of ice in the winter. You have eaten the same meal every day for the past four years and it isn’t something that you ever would have chosen to eat had you been free to choose. When times were bad for your owner you may not have eaten for days on end and all you could do was sit there and cry out to the wind because no one could hear you.

Because of the lack of nutrition and exercise you suffer excruciating pain due to your paper shell bones and aching joints. Your teeth have broken and have exposed roots from a lack of calcium and from you chewing on the bars of your cage in a feeble attempt to escape. Your declawed, butchered feet, often with bones protruding through the surface, ache from your constant pacing. Deep inside you know that you were meant to roam free, to be the king of beasts, but that seems like an unreal dream because you don’t know anything of the world outside your little cell. You roar out, with a powerful and fearful sound that can be heard 5 miles away, but no one calls back. No one tells you that you aren’t alone in the world.

One day your world changes. The door is opened and you think that someone has finally called for your amnesty. At first you just cannot believe your good fortune. There is soft grass beneath your feet for the first time ever. You see sights that you could only imagine before, like the tranquility of the mountains as dusk settles in, like the beauty of a sunrise over the water or just the unimaginable freedom of the coyotes and cougars and bobcats.

The ecstasy of the first couple of days over powers the pangs of hunger. You were designed to roam and defend a 400 square mile territory and in nine days your mangled feet have carried you almost 30 miles.

The only food you have ever known was a pile of bloody, fatty mush. You haven’t seen anything resembling what you know as food and a 425 pound tiger does have to eat. Instincts from hundreds of years are coursing through your veins, but because you never knew your mother, and she never had the three years to devote to your training, you have no idea how to feed yourself. You are weak from hunger, dehydration and more exercise than you have had in your entire life now. The people who had pulled you from your mother’s soft, warm, nursing belly and force fed you so that you would depend on them are no where to be found.

Until now you have avoided humans because you wanted to savor every moment of this exhilarating freedom. But now they are coming to you. You see them stalking you through the brush and hear the roars of the helicopters and ATV’s. You would like to think that they are coming to bring you something to eat, but you sense the tension in the air. You know that they are afraid of you. If you walk toward them they will shoot, if you turn and run, they will shoot. So you just stand still and still they shoot.

As you are gasping for air and feel the life blood running from searing bullet holes through your body, what scenes would flash before your eyes? Being torn from your mother. Being handled by countless people who were paying to have their photos taken holding you as a cute little cub. Being forced to perform in a circus act or for some commercial. The monotony of thousands of days from inside your little cage. The hot days with no shade or the cold nights with no way to shield yourself from the blowing snow and rain.

This is all that most captive cats could revisit in those last moments before death, but at least this
tiger had a couple of days to add to his experience; a few precious days of what it felt like to be free.

It is easy to be angry at the people involved in this sad situation in California last month but we need to look at how we are promoting this sort of abuse by our actions and more commonly our inaction. Buying products that use animals in their commercials or testing helps to promote this very industry. Two Brothers may have had a nice message, but it used 30 tigers for the film. Where are those cats now? As long as zoos sell or give their animals to brokers who sell them to these roadside menageries your support of the zoo is supporting this misery. If you shake your head and say, “What a shame!” and do nothing, you are just as guilty of this tiger’s blood.

We have made it so easy to contact your representatives in government that there is absolutely no excuse for inaction. By entering your zip code you find your senators, state representatives, the USDA, and the press in your area. With simple forms to fill in your name and address you can click to send pre-written letters or you can add your own thoughts. There is legislation pending that can curb the abuse. Some of it has failed six years in a row because not enough people cared to speak up. Visit our site at http://capwiz.com/bigcatrescue/home/ and see how you can really make a difference with just a few mouse clicks. Don’t let this tiger die in vain.

For the cats,
Carole Baskin, CEO of Big Cat Rescue

MAN CONVICTED OF 56 COUNTS OF ANIMAL CRUELTY

Only 70 of the tigers found in April 2003 survived when authorities closed down Tiger Rescue, which was billed as a retirement home for unwanted tigers, leopards and lions. Many of the cats, found 50 miles east of Los Angeles, had appeared in movies and television commercials.

John Weinhart, Tiger Rescue’s owner and self-proclaimed animal rescuer, was convicted in Riverside on Tuesday of 56 counts of animal cruelty after investigators found dead tiger cubs stored in a freezer and dozens of tiger carcasses strewn about his property.

Investigators say they found 11 newborn tiger and leopard cubs living in an attic space, 58 frozen tiger cub carcasses and the rotting or mummified carcasses of at least 30 exotic cats scattered around the property, some tied to abandoned cars.

“This verdict sends a strong message across the country that cruelty to animals will not be tolerated,” said Michael Markarian, president of The Fund for Animals. The group led the effort to nurse the lions back to health. Hundreds of volunteers built shaded areas for the big cats and fed them 650 pounds of meat a day. 31 of the cats went to accredited sanctuaries and 39 went to non accredited sanctuaries as the accredited spaces filled up. The Fund for Animals raised $250,000 to help build the tiger habitat at PAWS in California.

“To see these magnificent animals be able to play and swim in habitats conducive to their well being is nothing short of miraculous given the sickening conditions in which they were found,” said Chuck Traisi of The Fund for Animals.

Traisi spent the last 20 months away from his home and family in Riverside County overseeing the health and welfare of the neglected tigers. “I can now go home,” he said, knowing that these animals will live the rest of their lives protected and in excellent condition.”

Above: Jade, female African Leopard Right: Zabu, female White Tiger & Cameron, male Lion

FLORIDA PANTHER FOUND DEAD

The remains of an 18-month-old male Florida panther were found east of Immokalee. This cat (known as FP126) had been relocated on May 28, 2004, from Big Cypress National Preserve to Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officers relocated the animal after the Miccosukee Tribe reported he was spending time near their homes and occupying the site of the tribe’s annual Green Corn Dance.

When the cat began exploring and expanding his new area he encountered another adult male panther that killed him.

Conservationists had expressed concern when it was relocated because they feared the cat would encounter other members of the species and that natural conflict might result.

People often call and ask us to relocate a bobcat from their neighborhood. As development encroaches on these animals habitats they are forced into smaller and smaller tracts of land where overlap is bound to occur. A bobcat needs five square miles of territory in order to have enough prey to sustain him. Nature has hard wired these cats to mark and protect their boundaries to the death. If we were to move a bobcat or Florida Panther from its home range because a person happened to build a house there, to another, seemingly more appropriate, area it is to condemn that cat to death when he meets the resident animals who are already struggling to find enough food. We don’t relocate wild cats and this example of the Florida Panther being killed is exactly why.

BIG CAT RESCUE GOES UNDERCOVER

Big Cat Rescue has purchased state of the art undercover surveillance equipment to document the many cases of animal cruelty right here in the Bay area as well as surrounding counties. An informant has brought back footage of a Tiger cub chained to a card table so tightly that the cub could not even stand up. The owners were allowing the public to have their photo taken with the cub for $10 each. This attraction had been hired by a Christmas tree stand to drum up holiday sales. More footage was taken at a neighboring county where three scared Lion cubs were being sold to the highest bidder at a livestock auction. Photographic evidence has also been collected showing two White Tiger cubs that were kept in a cage so small that the fur and skin was completely rubbed off of their noses and foreheads. These cubs were being used for photographic opportunities by their owners. This attraction was hired by a used car lot to draw in the Saturday crowd. These videos and photographs will be used to expose the truth to our legislators and the media so that better laws can be enacted to protect the animals.

Do you have video or photographs that could aid in this cause? Or perhaps a tip or lead of an upcoming exploitation? Email us at info@bigcatrescue.org.
Faith is a female Florida Bobcat that was taken in by Big Cat Rescue last December. She was an orphan and only a few weeks old.

From the beginning, Faith was fed a whole prey (killed) diet so that she would grow accustomed to eating things that she may find in the wild. Faith readily accepted this form of sustenance and graduated to whole prey.

Her initial enclosure was a long chain link run that was approximately 265 square feet in size. Half of the run was barricaded so that prey could be released for her to catch. Faith proved herself as a formidable hunter. She caught quickly to the game of cat and mouse, and so once again the stakes needed to be raised.

With her expanding skills in mind, another rehab enclosure was being constructed. This mega rehab facility was generously sponsored by The Gasparilla Charity Horse Show. This new space provides a much more realistic “wild”.

After months of hard work, the staff and interns of Big Cat Rescue finally completed the construction of Faith’s new rehab cage. The 800 square foot enclosure was built in a secluded area of the sanctuary to give her privacy that she so desperately needs.

This enclosure looks just like one of our traditional Cat-a-tats with the 4”x4” welded wire and walls that curve. The whole enclosure, including the roof, has also been covered with a coated mesh wire that has smaller 1” holes. This was done so that prey can be released into her habitat, but can not escape the confines of the enclosure. The large scale of her new home will prove challenging to Faith when hunting for her dinner.

Additional enhancements were also made to the new enclosure including a large simulated rock cave, suspended platforms to give her aerial space, trees, bushes, and a wall fifteen feet long, four feet high, and three feet deep of tangled brush to hide in.

The most exciting addition was the installation of a new feeding device. Designed by the staff and interns, this new idea consists of laying a maze of large plumbing pipes that will go from one single point of entry, from a concealed post, to two exit points within Faith’s enclosure. A rat can be released into the pipe from the observation post and then the end of the pipe will be closed. The rat will instinctively travel through the pipe system following the light to the end of the tunnel. The best part about this system is that the location and time at which the rat will find it’s way into the enclosure will vary at each feeding, depending on the course the rat chooses. This will keep Faith in constant hunting mode and will prepare her better for the sporadic availability of food in the wild.

As mentioned in previous articles featuring Faith, each pivotal moment of Faith’s story has been captured on film through the use of a surveillance camera. Working with the footage, the staff has been able to evaluate Faith’s progress and health, while maintaining distance from the wildcat. A two minute featurette highlighting Faith’s rescue and rehabilitation is now available as an extra on Big Cat Rescue’s Big Cat Picture, a 60 minute film. To order this VHS or DVD for $24.40 fill out the order form.

Update

Just a few weeks ago, Faith was trapped and relocated to her new Rehab Enclosure. Surveillance video has caught her enjoying the many features of her new space as well as the success of the feeder tubes.

The first video showed Faith chasing down her dinner only to have it find sanctuary inside the tube from which it came. Having prey escape from her grasp was actually a good experience for her to have. She had to learn patience and the value of concealing herself prior to ambush.

Faith also had her first live rabbit. Since she had never seen a rabbit before it was feared that she may not recognize it as prey. She did an amazing job at taking down the rabbit and even surprised us all by burying her kill so that she could return to feed on it. This is a very important skill for her to know in order to survive in the wild.

Faith will be leaving us soon as her release will be this spring. More than a year of hard work will soon pay off, when the staff will get to see her bounding towards a life of freedom.

Give the Gift of Membership!

Join Big Cat Rescue’s Membership Program today and start enjoying your exclusive Membership benefits. Invites to all Big Cat Rescue events, 10% off your Trading Post purchases, Tour Passes, Photos, Donor Recognition in a future issue of The Big Cat Times, and more are all part of the welcome package that you will receive when you become a “Member of the Big Cat Pride”. The Membership kit also makes a great gift. Since tour passes are included in every kit you can even give the packet to someone who has never even been to Big Cat Rescue.

Each kit includes an 8x10 color photo, personalized address labels, membership welcome newsletter, and the following gifts;

- Animal Lover $30 - 1 Tour Pass
- Habitat Defender $500 - 10 Tour Passes, BCR Tee, & Night Tour for 2
- Wild Life Protector $150 - 6 Tour Passes & BCR Tee
- Forest Friend $50 - 2 Tour Passes
- The King of the Jungle $10,000
- The Explorer $1,000, Big Cat Pride $5,000

Order your kit today using the order form on page 8. For details on the Membership levels below request information using the order form, call (813) 920-4130 or visit www.BigCatRescue.org

Five more Tigers have retired to Big Cat Rescue from the Circus. Narak (pictured above), India (pictured at left), King, Princess, and Nala. They have all settled in quite well and are enjoying their new spacious Cat-a-tats. The circus has generously funded their habitats and supports their ongoing care.