



Zoo Edition Archives - Winter 2001

Excerpts from an interview with Sallie Stahl and Bea Lorimor, two of WPZ's laborers in the maintenance department:

WPZ: Can you give me a brief description of your daily duties??

Bea: Work starts at 6 a.m. I help assign duties if needed to the crew, unlock buildings on zoo grounds, and do lots of cleaning.

Sallie: We open up, clean buildings, keep pathways clear and do whatever comes up.

WPZ: Do you cover certain areas or the whole zoo?

Sallie: For me, it's divided up. I cover the south end of the zoo, including the Education Center and the Family Farm.

Sallie: I'm everywhere. My scheduled areas vary during the week. Sometimes I'm in Northern Trail, Australasia, Day and Night Exhibit, or the gorilla exhibits.

WPZ: What brought you to the zoo?

Sallie: Dave Wymore (who had a 30+ year career at WPZ, retiring as maintenance crew chief in 1999) was sitting at Kidd Valley, where I was working. I was sweeping near him and he asked if I wanted a job at the zoo! That was in 1985 and I was hired on as a seasonal worker.

Bea: I applied to the City of Seattle and was hired on in 1994 to do maintenance at the summer concerts part-time. From there, I was chosen from the pool of workers to do full-time maintenance.

WPZ: What do you think are some valuable skills and strengths needed for this position?

Sallie: A good attitude.

Bea: The ability to work under any kind of weather conditions since the zoo is open every day. Also, the challenge of being able to deal with a variety of situations in an efficient and safe manner.

WPZ: What are some challenges of the job?

Sallie: Worrying about the public and their safety.

Bea: Yes, the school groups and events are major factors. Also, keeping the communication lines open with all of the other departments within the zoo, so that everything runs safely and smoothly for everyone.

WPZ: What are some rewards of the job?

Sallie: The beautiful atmosphere and the positive environment. It's a great place to work!

Bea: I love being around the animals. I also enjoy the variety of work, everything from setting up tables to cleaning up puke. Okay, maybe I could use a little less variety in my job! I've also been able to help out with the African Village Mural Project. The kids are great. It's been really amazing.

WPZ: How does this job contribute to wildlife conservation?

Sallie: Keeping up the grounds, keeping things clean and healthy for the animals and the people, and keeping this a safe environment to visit and work in. Also, we work hard at recycling.

Bea: The City of Seattle is also moving towards using detergents and cleaners that are more environmentally-friendly. We also make sure there's proper disposal of wastewater and that the paper towels we use are made from recycled paper.

WPZ: Looking at the big picture, without maintenance laborers like you, the zoo would not be able to function as a facility for education, conservation and recreation.

Sallie: That's true! I never really thought of it that way.