



Zoo Edition Archives - Fall 1999

Excerpts from interview with WPZ staff member, Tina Mullett:

WPZ: What is your job here at the zoo?

Tina: I'm the senior keeper for the tropical rain forest building and the bird areas, the penguins, the temperate forest, waterfowl, and the conservation aviary. What I do is supervise all the keepers that work in those particular areas and coordinate the activities that go on day to day.

WPZ: Do you take care of any of the animals?

Tina: Yes I do. I'm trained to cover any of the areas, so if someone is sick or on vacation I can come in and help cover. And I help with special procedures or when we're catching an animal up to take it to Animal Health. The rest of the time I do paperwork, attend meetings. That part of the job isn't as interesting as working with the animals.

WPZ: What kind of training did you have to make you qualified for your job?

Tina: I have a Bachelor of Science in zoology. When I came to Woodland Park I had 6 years of experience working as a zookeeper so I've been a keeper for just about 18 years now.

WPZ: What kinds of classes did you take in school?

Tina: I took classes in parasitology and animal behavior, a lot of chemistry and calculus.

WPZ: Did you have a favorite subject in school?

Tina: My favorite subject was science.

WPZ: What made you want to be a zookeeper?

Tina: When I was younger and going to school I wasn't particularly interested in becoming a zookeeper. It wasn't until after I got out of college that I considered becoming a keeper. When I was younger I thought it would be more interesting to do lab work. Then when I was in college I realized that it was boring being in a lab all the time, and rather than looking at blood work, tissues and poop, it was more interesting to actually be in the field with the animals and look at their behaviors. At that time I switched tracks.

WPZ: What advice would you give to someone currently in school who's thinking about becoming a zookeeper?

Tina: Spend a lot of time watching animals, learning and reading about animals, helping out with family pets, and going to the library and reading. If you want to be a zookeeper you really have to develop your observation skills and get to know what's normal for animals so you can spot when there's something wrong. Just be observant and watch animals.

