

More! Indulgent Anniversary ramble

Sally Walker

On the occasion of Zoo Outreach Organisation's Silver Jubilee Year and South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation Tenth Year Anniversary, grateful thanks and kudos belong to our donors, both "in kind" and in cash. We've had many donors over the years and every donation of any quantity or kind is appreciated and used in a way that donors could appreciate. We'll recognize all by name next issue but this issue is about donors without which ZOO would not exist at all. The first such donors were my parents, Norman and Doy Raulston who supported me financially in India throughout my zoo life. I could live here and work without salary due to their financial and emotional support.

The old Department of Environment (DoE), then attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India and Secretary Dr. T. N. Khoshoo, not only gave us a substantial start-up grant to run ZOO for some time but even suggested the idea in the first place, an NGO modeled on Friends of Mysore Zoo but national. So without DoE, we would not be. Also Sri Fatesinghrao Gaekwad supported ZOOS' PRINT that whole first year, coming to our rescue when it occurred to me that I had foolishly forgotten to include a monthly magazine for Indian zoos in my DoE funding proposal.

Thereafter, for some years, our most generous and helpful donors and supporters was the Coimbatore industrial and business community. **Sri. G. Rangaswamy and Nandini Rangaswamy** of Pioneer Mills led an initiative to start a zoo in Coimbatore and we became acquainted during their visit to the Mysore Zoo. As it happened soon after, my snarky newspaper articles about a particular government department landed me in trouble and I could not get my visa renewed or live in the state of Karnataka. The Rangaswamys, of **Pioneer Mills** came to my and ZOO's rescue, helping me move, find a home/office, and meet their own zoo supporters and friends. Over the next few years, these good and generous people provided so much support for ZOO. Not just money but other valuable things ... **Shri Vijay Mohan, (then) Vice Chairman & Managing Director of Pricol Industries**, for example, not only assisted financially but also permitted me to use their office and equipment as well as their staff. I learned typesetting from **Mr. Venkatesan**, one of their managers, and spent long hours for several days a month putting together ZOOS' PRINT and using their laser printer to print polymasters so we could publish inexpensively on offset. On top of that, Pricol gave the major advertisement and also paid salaries for few staff. Other Coimbatore industrialists, such as **G.K. Rajagopal, Vijayeswari Textiles Ltd; D. Jayavarthanelu, Lakshmi Machine Works Ltd; Shri. D. Srinivasan, Sree Annapoorna Hotel; Jairam Varadraj, M.D., ELGI Equipments Limited & K. Ramaswamy, M.D., Roots Multiclean Limited** contributed advertisements to ZPt and assisted in other ways as well...for several years. Without Coimbatore industrialists there would be no Z.O.O.

After our DoE grant period was over, there was a change in the Department personnel which ended ZOO grants. Although we continued to get occasional grants from DoE from time to time, the provision of infrastructure came to an end -- a big setback! Without funds for infrastructure an organization can't survive. Items like rent, salaries,

utilities, local travel, etc., amount to a significant sum. Most donors don't want any part of infrastructure. Although I understand the need to be careful with limited funds, this restriction forces organization ready to address issues and provide useful services to spend time and energy trying to raise funds by sales of products and services or, worse, to cheat and fiddle funds. ZOO has never been successful at commercial projects and we don't fiddle or cheat. We lost money at every commercial undertaking ventured and still have stacks of very attractive greeting cards we invested in maybe 10 years ago! And we are so honest that the inspector who came to review our books for getting FCRA permission was shocked. He shook his head with amazement and said "you really **do** spend **all** your money on projects!"

So we thank our donors whose bylaws and policy permit them to give some amount for infrastructure, either rent, salary, or other running costs, and the rest of this ramble will focus on those who have permitted 10-20% of their donation to be used for the bedrock costs and thus enabled many other projects to get done.

Chester Zoo/North of England Zoological Society was perhaps the first to permit us a line item for infrastructure and they are still one of our major donors for publications and both *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation activities, wise advisors and good friends after more than 20 years. The **Universities Federation for Animal Welfare UFAW** was also an early donor who still supports ZOO's publications, education and welfare projects while permitting a percentage of their support grant to be used for office. The **IUCN SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group** support part of Sanjay's salary since he joined and supported some of the important projects of the network. **Dr. Nan Schaeffer and SOS Rhino Foundation** was a friend and colleague since Mysore Zoo days, coming to my rescue during bad times and later contributing funds to ZOO running costs. In the very early years, really and truly, this money was crucial to our very existence, and still is although now we have a very few more such donors, just enough. US Fish and Wildlife Service wisely and generously permits grantees doing projects to allocate a percentage towards certain infrastructural items. **Knowsley Safari Park**, (thanks to **Lord Derby and Nick Ellerton**) have been a very generous and flexible donor on the subject of infrastructure. **The Invertebrate Department / Zoological Society of London** has sponsored our entomologist for many years now as well as providing encouragement and expertise. **Columbus Zoo** also has been a regular donor to projects and occasionally we ask for a portion of our project. **Wildlife Conservation Society WCS, Dept of International Education** underwrote salary for our Education Officer.

We are not ungrateful for the donations for our projects which did not include an infrastructure component. Far from it. Our working life has been filled with variety, challenges, satisfaction and learning many things because of all our project donors. My next ramble or rant will focus on those generous individuals and institutions who paid for projects minus infrastructure, thereby helping us fulfill our goals for conservation and providing much satisfaction.

Insider perspective - My fruitful years with Zoo Outreach Organisation

R. Marimuthu*

I have two grateful, loyal, dedicated, and magnanimous mentors in my professional life, both of whom gave me unprecedented help to shape and build my career and knowledge on zoos in particular and wildlife in general. They have been doing this for years and benefitted many other students. They are Dr. S. Paulraj, former Deputy Director of Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Chennai and Sally Walker, Founder/Director, Zoo Outreach Organisation. Dr. Paulraj had helped me in the earlier part of my life, during and after my studies. Madam Sally has been doing this for several years and even now. My acquaintance with Dr. Paulraj began during my post graduate studies at A.V.C. College, Mayiladuthurai and he was my co-guide for the M.Sc. in Wildlife Biology field project in 1986 in Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary. After that, I lost contact of him for about two years because I continued my studies and did my bachelors degree in education (B.Ed). Again I met Dr. Paulraj when he came as an External Examiner to the A.V.C. College at Mayiladuthurai and he offered me a temporary job at the zoo. Without any hesitation I joined the zoo in 1988 and worked until I joined Zoo Outreach Organisation. During my two years tenure at the Vandalur zoo, Dr. Paulraj taught me and my friends Baskar and Manimozhi so many things from zoo education, animal care, modern zoo concept etc. I became very much involved with interpretation, research and also looked after one third of the zoo dealing with animal keepers and upkeep of the animals.

At some point in this tenure I had a chance to meet and talk to Madam Sally Walker few times. I found that she was so caring and courteous at this time. On every occasion she visited Chennai she paid a visit to the zoo and I was the one who received her at the railway station. Before I met her, Dr. Paulraj shared lot about her regarding her service to the Indian Zoo community, publications, rendering help to individual zoo personnel etc.

Two years passed by at the Arignar Anna Zoo while I learned many new things. On the one evening of December 1990 Dr. Paulraj called me and related that Madam Sally was looking for a Research Assistant and she was interested to have me for that post. So I proposed you, he said. He also told me that it was a good offer and if I worked for Sally and Zoo Outreach Organisation, then I would definitely learn and develops my skills. At that juncture I did not fully comprehend his words, but I valued what he told each and every time later when I worked for ZOO. Really Dr. Paulraj is a forecaster. The next day night I left for Coimbatore, leaving my zoo and friends behind and to join ZOO, Coimbatore. I reached Coimbatore on Sunday, 16 December 1990 and met Madam Sally Walker and

her housekeeper and adopted sister, Sarojamma at No.5 Bharathi Colony office. Sally offered me a job as Research Assistant. Not only the job but also boarding and lodging as well at the office premise as I could not support this myself at that time. Sarojamma looked after me very well with her tasty meals all the time and she was my foster mother.

Madam Sally started to teach me one by one. Most of these skills were done for the first time in my life. I learned to use the computer, Xerox machine, posting, basic office administration, some secretarial skills, basic accounting, Desk Top Publishing and other duties of the office. She arranged a spoken English class at her expense. At some point she put me as Managing Editor of Zoos Print Magazine. She started CBSG India, the first national or any kind of network of CBSG, SSC, IUCN and later this morphed into CBSG South Asia which was the first regional network. So I could become involved in this network in its initial days.

Sally had sent to me one or two mini zoos for vulture surveys and also arranged visit to some major zoos in India such as National Zoological Park, Nandakanan Zoo, Vizag zoo, Assam State Zoo, Alipore Zoo etc., was helpful to see the diversity of zoo animals and also meet zoo officials to know the management practices. She gave me a chance to coordinate and attend Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) workshops for Manipur Brow Antlered Deer in Mysore Zoo (1992), Lion-tailed Macaque at Vandalur Zoo (1993) and Indian Rhinoceros at Jaldapara WLS, West Bengal (1993). These workshops of scientific analysis were really useful for me to understand Captive Breeding Specialist Group's (CBSG) Vortex tool and participatory group dynamics to assess species threats and take steps to conserve. It was also useful to meet such experts like Dr. U. S. Seal, Dr. Thomas J. Foose etc.

ZOO sent me to the Wildlife Institute of India for attending two courses: one on Conservation Education and another on Zoo Management. Furthermore, ZOO sent me to three International courses: Conservation Education course at Malaysia, Endangered Species Management Course in Jersey, UK and again Conservation Education Course at UK. These local and foreign courses helped me to broaden my knowledge on Conservation education and the modern zoo's role to save endangered species. I also made many new friends in India and abroad with whom I still

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keep in touch and sharing our conservation interests.

In the meantime Sally asked me to become involved in the Coimbatore Zoological Park Society's public relations work with Ms. Latha Balasundaram. It was also a great experience to meet tribal people often at the park site Anaikatti and liaison with them for the development of the park. I am very grateful to Madam Sally, Mr. Rangaswamy, our president and Mrs. Nandini, Treasurer to have faith on me to do this work.

I had to leave ZOO in May 1994 for my personal reasons and worked for a decade in Brunei, Darussalam not related to wildlife. I looked for a wildlife or zoo job but could not get it but still I maintained my contact with Sally and ZOO. I came back to Coimbatore at the invitation of Madam Sally to work again for ZOO in July 2004. In my second stint, I was posted as Education Officer and since then I have been looking after ZOO's education programmes, supplying of education materials to conservation educators, conducting teacher training workshops in South & South East Asia and also in-house trainings on particular species or issues. I was invited to attend one of the Teachers for Tigers workshop, developed by Wildlife Conservation Society, USA using active learning methods to teach trainers about tiger conservation. Later on I became involved with conducting such workshops for other trainees. ZOO has conducted 11 such workshops so far and trained 345 teacher trainers in India, Bangladesh. I was part of this workshop as a trainer and evaluator and gained understanding.

ZOO adapted this methodology and developed teaching guides for Hoolock Gibbon and conducted six workshops in Assam trained about 200 people and Human elephant co-existence and conducted 3 workshops each in West Bengal-India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sumatra-Indonesia and very recently in Bhutan and 15 workshops altogether and trained about 400 persons. Conducting these workshops as a trainer gave me new experience in each and every time.

After I returned from Brunei and joined ZOO again, Sally recommended me to attend Wildlife Conservation Society's Fellow's training in advanced education at the Bronx zoo (2006) and also for International Zoo Educators meeting in South Africa (2006).

Whatever I said in the above it is all because of Madam Sally Walker and I am really indebted to her to offer me a chance to work with Zoo Outreach Organisation and create opportunities for my career development through attending, coordinating and conducting trainings and also assigning my professional status. I really enjoying working with her and learning lot of new things. She has been a good teacher throughout and I have been an obedient student as well. Whatever I learnt from her and ZOO always helps me to step forward in my life, not only in academic but also in social. I admire Madam Sally's passion on wildlife in particular on *ex-situ* conservation and her vision and also her dedicated life for wildlife conservation.

Manju Siliwal*

It was in 2001, I visited Zoo Outreach Organisation (ZOO), Coimbatore for the first time as a participant for a Tarantula Hand-on-training workshop. I had never thought that by next year I will be a part of close-knit family 'ZOO CREW'. In last twenty five years, ZOO gradually and steadily progressed and its credit goes to Ms. Sally Walker, founder of Zoo Outreach Organisation. Her dedication and working for the cause of wildlife conservation motivates everyone around her. She is source of inspiration for her staff as she works non-stop and is very punctual in her work. She says 'If you are passionate about your work then you never feel tired' and it is the reason that she works round the clock without any complain and salary. Also, she has been successful in giving sense of belongingness to every staff. It is the main sole reason that ZOO CREW is dedicated to work with ZOO.

I am very proud to be part of 25th year of ZOO.

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Your turn! ZOO Anniversary letters from our members and readers

Dr. Lala A. K. Singh*

I am moved to see the photograph of ZOO Crew with the writing on its top "25-years". Time really passes very fast. Days might have been longer when you think of the daily struggles to collect, compile and put facts between two cover for each "monthly" issue of ZP, which, in my opinion, has served the country a 'never before' feast of facts, knowledge and inspiration. An innumerable number of young field researchers have been inspired by seeing their name and observations printed!

I remember another bit of very good professional experience which only you could provide through ZP and internet. It is about our observations on melanistic tiger from Similipal and subsequent collection of information, analyses and which culminated in "Born Black" published by WWF around 1999. When you put the ZPJ publication on the web, I got some pictures from Dr Marcan, a veterinarian in USA on more tigers with aberrant colours which filled in the gaps of the hypothetical model I had created for colour aberration. So ZP has done a great contribution that way.

Last year, when camera traps were placed in Similipal as a part of the exercise for monitoring of tigers and other animals, it took some pictures that further confirmed what we observed from 1993 onwards, and what others had seen but not reported from 1974 to 1993. The observations on Bats I initiated at Ramathirha, and later pursued by Srushtidhar Rout (now, Dr S. D. Rout, faculty, Wildlife Conservation and Biology, North Orissa Univ.) was published by ZPJ. That was a great boost up for a young scientist.

The many CAMPS and PHVA workshops, the CBSG, RSG, bat, rodent, invertebrate, herp and amphibian groups — and so many things — really, it is very difficult to put these in a well-knit article, better done in my autobiography or a biography of someone else. There is so much to write about a friend (ZP) that stood beside me when I needed it most— it served as a life when I had almost left writing anything, either technical or popular.

ZOO has provided me the opportunity to avail a fellowship and study Animal Management, through which I had the unique interactions with a Supervisor who not only appreciated my answers but also didn't hesitate to remark that he also learnt certain things, and was impressed with a brochure I designed for Crocodile conservation.

Such good memories just because of ZOO and ZP (and its donors, undoubtedly).

That is regarding the contributions ZOOS' PRINT has made ALL THESE YEARS WITHOUT A BREAK (!!), to encourage young authors, and to bring together so much information from India and abroad about wildlife and a variety of other subjects, and disseminating these to so many readers every month.

May God bless you all for all that you are doing. I renew my best wishes for all of you.

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N Raveendran*

I got the appended e-edition of ZOOS' Print. Thanks a lot. Though I have not contributed directly for the growth of Zoo Outreach Organization & Zoos' Print magazine, I am proud to congratulate you all for having achieved this status after crossing lot of hurdles & milestones. I know about Sally's initial efforts and the contribution of the whole TEAM under her leadership to reach this level. Kudos to you all once again.

It is green in my memory, thank God. My association with you all started more than two decades back! Still I recall Sally entering into Pricol's office with a smiling gesture for learning Pagemaker and then typesetting ZOOS' PRINT using Pricol's computer.

I wish you all success in all your current & future endeavors too.

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