

# RAPHIA

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WINTER, 2004

## HOLIDAY GREETINGS

The Board of Directors of Canadian Organization for Tropical Education and Rainforest Conservation (COTERC) would like to extend best wishes to all of you over the holidays and for 2005. We hope that you enjoy the season and all the festivities that come with it.

There are some exciting developments that are unfolding in the history of COTERC. We mentioned in the previous issue of *Raphia* that we have formed a relationship with Global Visions International and we anticipate that Cano Palma Biological Station will become even more of a hands-on learning centre as a result. GVI will have people at the station 40 weeks per year conducting biological surveys, upgrading trails, working on local conservation and environmental efforts and teaching at the local high school. We are very excited about the possibilities for the future. In addition, Mario Garcia, our Station Manager, has

initiated environmental education for the local school in Tortuguero and you can read the article submitted by him and Jana Daigle in this issue.

While you are considering what presents to buy for Christmas, we hope that you will keep us in mind. By participating in the Partners in Preservation program, you help to continue our work at Cano Palma Biological Station and at the same time, you receive the benefit of a tax receipt, and the recipient of the gift receives a certificate and fact sheet about the particular animal that you have chosen.

We also have merchandise that we invite you to purchase. Please check out the enclosures here and consider supporting our conservation efforts.



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*Happy New Year!*





## TROPICAL TREAT ANOTHER SUCCESS



Janet Vatcher & Andrew Cresswell preparing for Tropical Treat

A BIG THANK YOU TO CAL WHITE & TORONTO ZOO FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT OF TROPICAL TREAT



Decorating Team :  
Malcolm Browne, Helen Willett, Alyson Dayly, Kayla McCloy, Taylor McCloy, Shay McCloy, Erika Babiuk, Mike Willett

Going, going, gone! Sold to the highest bidder! These were the words we heard at our eighth annual Tropical Treat Fundraiser held October 16<sup>th</sup>. The evening was a great success with 130 plus in attendance. We raised over \$12,000.00 which will provide our research station, Cano Palma in Tortuguero, Costa Rica, the necessary funds to improve our educational programs, and upgrade the existing facilities at the station.

This event does not happen without countless hours of planning, organizing and co-coordinating everything. I wish to extend a huge thank you to June Enright who helped me immensely in the early stages and kept me grounded. Thanks June! To Marilyn Cole, Tom Mason, Hilary Lee, Josh Feltham, Andrew Cresswell, Malcolm Enright, Bryan Bridgeman, June Enright, Fran Mason, the decoration crew, who started early morning to set up, a big thank-you to all.

The Atrium was transformed into a temporary rainforest courtesy of our volunteer Erika Babiuk which gave the room a tranquil and tropical atmosphere. Thanks to Erika and her decoration crew, Malcolm Browne, Alyson Dayly, Kayla McCloy, Shay McCloy, Taylor McCloy, Helen Willett and Mike Willett for their efforts and hard work. We would particularly like to thank George Chami of the Rainforest Café for the donation of the wonderful animals and other decorations. Dinner provided by Devine Dishes was plentiful and diverse in the items served.. Thanks to Dr. Peter Silverman, our Master of Ceremonies, and to Toby Styles, our auctioneer, for their continued support of COTERC and this event.

Entertainment provided by the Rhythm Dynamix Dancers under direction of Michelle Mitchell was well received and we certainly appreciate her efforts in bringing

by Janet Vatcher

her students to participate in Tropical Treat. Thank you.

Tropical Treat was also the scene to recognize some of our past Board members who have now retired. Chair Marilyn Cole recognized the efforts of Fran Mason for her years of service as Administrator and organizer of Tropical Treat; Malcolm Enright for his service as a Board member and co-organizer of Tropical Treat and his ongoing work on the Site Services Committee; Tom Mason for his service as Board member and past Vice President, as well as Director of Site Services; and Derrick Fulton, for his service as a Board member and past President, as well as ongoing advisory counsel. Each received a plaque honouring them for their contributions to COTERC.



Fran Mason, Tom Mason and Malcolm Enright receiving their awards from Chair Marilyn Cole

The silent auction had many unique and different items on display in the front hallway and everyone was coming and going, placing their bids. The COTERC table, games table, and the drink ticket table were very busy all evening. Thanks to Andrew Cresswell, Debbie Mason and Sharon Samaroo respectively for all their hard work. Donna Boyer and Sue Crawshaw worked non stop at the front desk greeting guests, and later sorting out the lists for the



Fran Mason, June Enright and Friend!



Some of the Silent Auction Items



Mark & Amanda Stone

Silent or Live auction items, making sure that everyone received the correct items.

To ensure that Tropical Treat is successful we need a constant flow of donations! This year many companies, corporations, and individuals supported us by donating hundreds of different items. COTERC thanks everyone for their donations in support of our event this year and it is through their support that we can continue

to fulfill our organization's mission in Costa Rica. As recognition for their contribution, we acknowledge all our donors and volunteers below. THANK YOU!!

Alexandre Antique Prints, Maps & Books  
 Orono Jungle Cat World  
 Robert Bateman  
 Sherston Shores Resort  
 Toronto Zoo  
 Reptillia  
 Hunter Farms  
 African Lion Safari  
 Art Gallery of Ontario  
 Bata Shoe Museum  
 Black Creek Pioneer Village  
 Blue & June Enright  
 Canadian Geographic Magazine  
 Canadian Museum of Nature  
 Casa Loma  
 CBC  
 Children's Museum  
 CN Tower  
 Cullen Gardens & Miniature Village  
 Fantasy Fair  
 International Society for Endangered Cats  
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Fantasy Fair  
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 Josh Feltham  
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 Centre  
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 Sir Charles Mackerras  
 Royal Ontario Museum

Royal Botanical  
 Gardens  
 Ripley's Moving  
 Theatre  
 Paramount Canada's  
 Wonderland  
 Ontario Science  
 Center  
 Oh Canada Eh?!  
 Niagara Falls Aviary  
 Pat Bugeja  
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 Janet Vatcher  
 Pennie Mason  
 Best Western St.  
 Jacobs  
 Mrs. F. Montgomery  
 Stoney Ridge Wines  
 Helicopter Co. Inc  
 Mark Stone  
 In Kind Canada  
 Judy Hall



## NEWS FROM CANO PALMA



Jana Daigle and Mario Garcia have sent along some photos

underwent major repairs and a top viewing deck was added—we now have the most elaborate dock on the Cano Palma! A new rancho for display of our collections has been built; and they have been busily painting and carving new trail signs, etc. This is in addition to their other duties of caring for visitors. Thanks, Jana and Mario

for all your hard work!

On another note, we are sorry to report that Mario Tortugo has decided to leave us after several years as serving as the Assistant Manager. He was a very valuable asset, and we will all miss him. Best of luck, Mario Tortugo!

to share with you, which will show you the hard work that they have been doing over the past year. The dock



The Main Building

The rancho was completed August 10th and currently includes a museum with a lab and some hammocks. The museum holds skulls of wildlife from the area, as well as a labeled seed & fruit display that is getting bigger every day. The lab has been completely screened in so that researchers can work comfortably day or night. Shelves have been added to store equipment and there are two smaller tables to hold brochures, souvenirs and posters. The rancho was built by Mario Tortugo and his brother Tono, with the help of staff & volunteers. We all had to haul the leaves out of the forest for the roof. Very hard work! Jana & Adriana could carry 2-3 leaves while Mario Tortugo could carry 8 and Tono 10! We are very proud of the rancho & the tourists who stop by from the various hotels find it interesting. The rancho was built thanks to donations from tourists in Costa Rica and from Turtle Beach Lodge.



The New Rancho

We are currently doing an inventory of the vegetation at Cano Palma Biological Station, and we are still walking the beach to count sea turtles who come up on the beach to nest, in order to ascertain the status of poaching for comparison with the south beach worked by the Caribbean Conservation Corporation.

## CLEVELAND AAZK DONATES TO COTERC

The Greater Cleveland Chapter of the American Association of ZooKeepers (AAZK) hosted the 30th Annual National AAZK Conference in the fall of 2003. The conference was a great success, and as a result the Chapter chose to donate \$2,000 to COTERC.

Two of the present Board members have ties to the Toronto Zoo, and COTERC co-founder Marilyn Cole was formerly on the Board of Directors of the national body of AAZK. We greatly appreciate this demonstration of support by our fellow zoo colleagues and want to thank them belatedly very much for this donation.



**BUY YOUR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS HERE!**

Still looking for a unique gift for that someone on your shopping list? Why not sponsor a *Partners in Preservation* Animal? Prices range between \$20 to \$100. Please see the insert for further details.

Or how about a *T-shirt* with the COTERC logo on it — only \$18. Colour

grey only. Most sizes available.

We also have assorted "*COTERC Critters*", for only \$5.00 each. Sorry, at this price we can't give you a choice, but we can guarantee you that they are all adorable!



We also are offering a beautiful 11" x 17 poster entitled "Sun Drenched Palms" generously donated by Canadian artist Valerie Kent. Specially priced at \$10, this lovely poster is in full colour and will make anyone think of the tropics!



**SPECIAL OFFER**

*Titles are limited, so first come, first served.*

Once Upon a Time in America — Eyes Wide Shut —  
 Dirty Harry — Blazing Saddles — JFK — Bodyguard —  
 Mean Streets — Shawshank Redemption

Please Contact Janet Vatcher, at  
[janet.vatcher@sympatico.ca](mailto:janet.vatcher@sympatico.ca)



Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**ORDER FORM**

Item Description	Size	Qty.	Price	Subtotal

Method of Payment

- Check
- Bill Me
- MasterCard

Order total \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 P.S.T. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 G.S.T. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shipping \$5.00 per item  
 Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## DR. WILLIAM RAPLEY, DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION

**I**n our last issue, we featured several of our directors. This month we highlight Dr. William Rapley, Director of Conservation. In 1982 Dr. Rapley became the Veterinarian for the U. of Western Ontario and served as the officer of the University Council on Animal Care. During this period Dr. Rapley held academic appointments in zoology, pathology and pharmacology. In 1988 he completed graduate work in envi-

ronmental toxicology.. Dr. Rapley returned to the Toronto Zoo in 1989 as Executive Director of the Biology and Conservation division where he is responsible for the animal and plant collection, exhibitory and research areas, including veterinary science, nutrition, reproduction, animal behaviour, botany and conservation programs. Dr. Rapley is the Director of the Conservation Biology and Research Centre, which provides graduate programs and internships in various fields.

ronmental toxicology.. Dr. Rapley is responsible for habitat coordination for zoo projects—over 300 have been completed since 1991.

Dr. Rapley has traveled extensively and is very active in

and supportive of numerous conservation and environmental initiatives. Presently he serves as president of the IUCN Canadian Committee and interacts with numerous international, national and local conservation & nature oriented organizations, including COTERC. He has visited Korea, China, Russia, France, Malaysia, Indonesia, Central Africa, East Africa, South Africa, South America, Galapagos Islands, Cuba, Jordan and numerous areas of North America.



## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CLASS GETS A+

BY JANA DAIGLE & MARIO GARCIA

**C**onservation issues in Costa Rica are always a topic of wide discussion. A large area of the country is being preserved; steps have been taken to initiate this global concern, such as the founding of national parks as well as the creation of biological reserves and stations. But one of the most important steps to help conservation is environmental education.

Since July 2004 Caño Palma has taken such an important step, taking time out of every

week to visit the small community of San Francisco located a few kilometers north of Tortuguero. Thursdays are the important day where Mario & Jana visit the small school of roughly 40 school children and spend one hour discussing environmental topics of the area. Recent subjects of discussion and homework have involved sea turtles, medicinal plants and what the national park system of Costa Rica is. It amazes us

every time we go to class and see how much knowledge of nature these youngsters of only 8 - 12 years of age hold. What plants are used as remedies, what plants butterflies like to eat from and how many sea

turtles they have seen in their short lifetime. Participation in the class has increased as more youngsters of the com-



Juan Pablo

community attend the classes and each child has the time to tell family stories, share drawings as well as review lessons and past homework.

Volunteers who come to stay at the station also get to share in this incredible experience. They are encouraged to participate in the class and share with the children, who are more than welcoming to the strangers.

To encourage the completion of homework, each child who shows the completed homework has their name placed in a draw and prizes such as

in a draw and prizes such as colouring books, pencil crayons and plasticine are awarded.

We have been sharing with them for a few months now, and the feeling of watching them learn, laugh and appreciate what we are working towards is something that really makes these experiences worthwhile. At times you see that changing the minds of elders who hold their customs can prove to be difficult, but sometimes you can make a child think twice before eating a turtle egg or killing a caiman. When it comes down to it, that is what it is all about; not preventing cultural customs but having its people understand the delicate balance with nature, and the constant struggle to keep our planet in a sustainable condition for our children.



Mario sharing with the children



CRITTERS OF CANO PALMA — JAGUAR

BY HELEN HUGGETT

The jaguar is the largest of the American cats and inhabits forests and savannahs near rivers, swamps and marshes from Mexico south through Central America to the forests of Brazil. It has also been found high up in the Andes Mountains. They have been spotted in the area of Cano Palma Biological Station.

Jaguars are solitary except at breeding time. There seems to be no definite breeding season except in the northern & southern limits of the jaguar's range when mating takes place in the spring. The gestation period is from 93 to 105 days after which time the female gives birth to 1-4 cubs. The eyes are closed and they have long, coarse buff coloured fur with black spots. They are

about 41 cm (16") in length and weigh 5.5 kg (12 lbs). The cubs remain in the den until they are about 6 weeks old, when they begin to follow their mother. At about 7 months they will attain their adult colours and at 9 or 10 months, they are about half grown. They stay with their mother for about 2 years and re mature by 3 years. It is thought that they live up to 20 years in the wild and 22 years in captivity. The jaguar is an endangered animal.

The jaguar is the largest and most powerful North American cat, and it is the only one that roars. It has a home range of 3-15 miles in diameter, where prey is abundant. It marks its territory with scent and tree scratching. Unlike

most cats, it is extremely fond of water, delighting to play in shallow pools on hot days. The jaguar hunts mostly at dawn and dusk on the ground, but sometimes ambushes prey by leaping from a tree. In the wild, the main food is capybara and peccary, but it will take a variety of prey such as otters, tapirs, turtles, caiman and even fish. It becomes nocturnal in areas inhabited by humans. The jaguar will eat small prey entirely, but larger prey is dragged to a hiding place for future consumption.

Many jaguars are killed because they are said to be a threat to livestock and humans. However, it is usually only old cats that turn to killing cattle. The main reason for their demise is their beautiful fur coat.



*THE JAGUAR IS AN ENDANGERED ANIMAL*

MORE TROPICAL TREAT PHOTOGRAPHS



Hilary Lee, Membership Secretary; Josh Feltham, Board member; guests-Dawn Todd and Karen Rosborough



Rhythm Dynamix Dancers



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COTERC'S BOARD & VOLUNTEERS

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A REPORT FROM A VISITOR TO CANO PALMA

**T**odd Lewis has visited Cano Palma Biological Station a few times and sent along this email dated November 17, 2004.

"Well, coming early was a good gamble. The first flood has come early this year and has been and gone in the last five days. Again it was a success for results on the behaviour of the animals, etc. Also the pond study has suffered a severe population crash for the ranas, due to two caimen coming in and gobbling them all up! Sods, I spent so long marking them all!! Also a tropical gaspar was in the pond — a metre long and undoubtedly gobbling frogs too. It wasn't a massive flood but it was a good one that reached the office—just. The whole of Limon province has suffered a flood and more montane areas were washed out, causing extensive evacuation of some villages.

I have found some interesting tenacity levels in *fitzingeri* and *pumilio*, and this should account for some useful data.

I had the pleasure of seeing another ocelot this year during the flood; also an aquatic cockroach feeding on a huge ctenid spider! Caimen also penetrated the flooded forest by up to 300 metres this year. As it receded, I saw some making terrestrial runs in and out of temporary pools during the day, to return to the river. I even caught one with a *bufo* coniferous stuffed so much in its belly, it was trying to ram another down its throat. It seems they key in on the vocalizations of this species as the flood happens, as it seems to be the only species that makes an apparent attempt to breed during this time. Other species just go completely mute and are high inconspicuous. Tadpoles of coniferous were rife in the temporary pools after the rain."