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Wildlife museum preserves exotic animals, researches species reproductivity

Continued from page 3

the facilities at the veterinary school, Herman said.

He said although they did initially begin the center to study reproductivity, they are now switching to research and species preservation, under the direction of Dr. Jim Jensen, the head of the Wildlife and Exotic Animal Center.

"Most of the animals were donated because they had a form of congenital defect," Herman said. "We research the animals and try to figure out how we can treat them, but we also have animals that we are currently studying for reproductive reasons."

One particular study performed at the Wildlife Center, involved the first artificial insemination of an addax, which is an African desert animal, Herman said.

The center also has been working on a project involving Armenian Red sheep.

These studies are to see if we could somehow reproductively use the Red sheep to bring back the Big Horn sheep, said Herman.

Herman said the center is also conducting research on fallow deer for a private ranch in San Antonio.

"The medicine we practice is different from horse and cattle medicine because of the value of animals," Herman said.

"Because they are so expensive, people want them cured and will pay. That allows us to practice really good medicine."

Another group of animals they are very interested in studying are the ostriches they have at the center, Herman said.

"In Texas the ostrich industry is growing fast. A pair of birds runs between \$15 to \$25,000 and really no one knows anything about them. We are growing chicks to figure out the best diet and we are experimenting with antibiotics and blood work to obtain valuable information for ill-

ness," Herman said.

But ostriches and fallow deer are not the only unusual creatures that can be found at the Wildlife center, in fact, there are a pair of llamas, Flower and Tony, an African tiger named Delilah, some emus, a feral pig and even Fred and Ginger, a pair of peacocks.

But the center does not end there, the center also houses a very interesting museum which contains head mounts of animals from Africa, Asia, North and South America.

Since the museum is mainly used for teaching purposes, Herman said the heads are mounted at the height they would normally stand in the wild.

"The exhibits are all donated to the center," Herman said. "I have mixed emotions about bringing people in here because we are set up to preserve species and we do not want to promote hunting of them because there is a high market for many of the animals in here."

As inviting as it may sound, the Wildlife center and museum are not open to the public for viewing.

Herman said they are hoping to one day have enough staff available to be able to open the museum to the public. But, for now the animals are their main concern.

For those wondering how to become involved in studying exotic animals, there is a program available for those interested.

"Through the vet physiology department we work with undergraduates," Herman said. "If you are interested in working with the animals it is best to get in the 485 program. Students who work out here get good hands-on experience through feeding, handling and general care of the animals, and we only make them do a little cleaning," he said.

So if you are ever in the veterinary complex, you might take a drive by the Wildlife and Exotic Center. And who knows, you just might catch a glimpse of a dancing ostrich or two.

Madonna's latest project true, daring

Continued from page 3

and laying her head next to the marker, expressing the desire to be buried sideways, next to her mother.

In another effort to make peace with the past, she invites her father and her stepmother to her homecoming show in Detroit, and, along with a cheering crowd, sings him a raucous Happy Birthday. Her brother Christopher Ciccone, a production assistant and art director on her show is featured as a major part of her support network, but another brother Martin, something of a black sheep in the family, expresses the difficulty of living up to his sister's success. An awkward, hurried reunion with a childhood friend only serves to underscore her isolation from everyday people, and her status as an extremely busy pop icon.

Most "rockumentaries" strive to reveal something of a performer's history and roots, and convey not just the flash but also the rough edges. "Truth or Dare" shows not only the technical glitches like faulty transmitters and torrential rains, which make a smooth performance difficult or impossible, but also the personal problems - jealousy, rivalry, loneliness, false rumors - which can disrupt a close-knit family.

Conventional documentaries usually strive to address some social ill, and this film is no different. Madonna is a long-time champion of gay rights and has selflessly donated her time, money and talent for AIDS fundraisers. Her mostly gay dancers are shown cavorting with her, joking, posing, attending a gay rights march, and during a game of truth or dare, kissing. In a moving group prayer before their last performance, a benefit performance dedicated to her late friend, artist Keith Haring, she urges everyone to do their very best so that people will come together to support the cause.

But is all of this the real Madonna? In a recent interview, she claimed that no one will ever know the real her, but that even the partial truth could be revealing. Warren Beatty comments at one point, "Turn the camera off? She doesn't want to live off-camera, much less talk." True? Maybe. Daring? Definitely.

