

NCstate

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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Dr. John W. Manning, 2700 7th Street
Co. "A" 66th AF
APO San Francisco, California 94124

Dear Charlie,

I received your interesting letter
to the Class of '40 about a month ago,
but am just now getting around to
answering it.

Surely wish I could have been
back at State for Alumni Day, but
you see how things are. Perhaps
I'll get to be there next year... I'm
pretty optimistic right now.

Since leaving State I've lost
track of a lot of the boys - particularly
during the past 21 months that I've
been overseas. However, I plan to
write home tonight to have them send
\$3.00 to the Alumni Office, so I'll receive
the State Commemorative.

Since leaving State, I spent 18
months working for the Washington Miller
Company in Virginia. That was before I

★
OUR
BOYS
AT
WAR
★

FINDING COMMON GROUND

Stacey Ludlum '03 MR designs spaces for zoos where animals and humans can exist in ways that benefit them both.

Like a lot of kids who love animals, Stacey Ludlum '03 MR grew up wanting to be a veterinarian. That changed, though, when she got the chance to shadow a veterinarian to learn more about the job—and got a bit squeamish while watching surgery being performed on a cat's leg.

So Ludlum found a different way to tap into her love of animals. She married her appreciation for science (she was a zoology major as an undergrad at Michigan State University) with her creative side and desire to tell stories (she earned her master's degree in design at NC State) by designing spaces where animals and people can interact in a way that is beneficial to both of them. Since 2003, she has been a zoological designer with PGAV Destinations, a design firm based in St. Louis, Mo., that specializes in theme parks, resorts and other tourist spots.

"Zoos are very important in the education of our guests and of the public at large," she says. "We're functioning to inspire people, to touch their hearts, to make them be as passionate about animals as I am."

Most of Ludlum's work involves additions to existing zoos or adding animal features to theme parks. One of her favorite projects has been designing and overseeing the construction of a new home for the Big Bear Alpine Zoo, a wild animal rescue and rehabilitation operation near San Bernardino, Calif. The animals there, from a bald eagle with one wing to a three-legged bear, have either been injured or imprinted on people in a way that would make it impossible for them to survive in the wild.

"For Big Bear, with their collection being so specialized, they need special habitats if the animals are not able to climb or fly," she says. "But the animals still need to get exercise, and the collection is always changing."

Ludlum, who has three cats and a dog, designs with animals and humans in mind. At the Louisville (Ky.) Zoo, for example, she designed a polar bear exhibit that included a room with glass panels that visitors can look through as the bears play with items such as trash cans filled with paper seeded with treats. At the Columbus (Ohio) Zoo, Ludlum helped design the Heart of

STACEY LUDLUM'S BEST PLACE TO VIEW A PACK OF WOLVES:

I've been fascinated for years with the shared bear/wolf exhibit at Tierpark Goldau in Switzerland. Wolves have access to an adjacent grizzly exhibit through a permeable barrier that allows the wolves to escape to the safety of their own habitat, but is not large enough for bears to get through.



SOME OF STACEY LUDLUM'S FAVORITE ZOO SPACES:

Columbus (Ohio) Zoo: They're doing a fantastic job in terms of trying to emotionally touch their visitors.

San Diego Zoo Safari Park: The overnight experience there is amazing. You get special tours, cool stories about the animals. You stay overnight right next to the elephants. In the morning, you go on a sunrise safari before anyone else gets there.

Discovery Cove, Orlando: It's more of an aquatic experience. It's a very low-key experience, limited to about 1,000 people a day. It feels like you're at a resort, surrounded by animals.

Los Angeles Zoo: They recently added a pair of Tasmanian devils to their collection. These guys were fun to watch as they shared a giant bone which was larger than either one of the devils. One would take the bone, run over to the other side of the exhibit, chew on it for a couple of minutes. Then the second one would come over, take it from the first—without argument—and run to the other side of the exhibit. They did this over and over until one of them took the bone, hid it inside a den, and walked off like nothing happened.



Africa region that features more than 40 acres where animals can roam and smaller spaces that animal handlers can use to educate visitors about different creatures.

The interests of animals and human visitors are not necessarily contradictory, Ludlum says. “We usually start with the animal, about their spatial needs and how they use the space,” she says. “Then we’ll think about what is the coolest thing about seeing a lion. That’s how we build the experience. We also look for a story, so it often starts with a conservation story. How do you create a space that reflects that message?”

Understanding how animals behave helps Ludlum design spaces that work for them and zoo visitors. Knowing that lions like to be up high where they can survey the terrain, Ludlum makes sure those spots can be seen easily by visitors. She may put rocks in a cool, shady spot—again, where visitors can see them—knowing that animals will be drawn there in the heat of summer.

“The best way to learn is by watching how people interact at exhibits,” she says. “There’s nothing cooler than watching a person—kid or adult—have that moment with an animal where they are up close and personal. You can just see that awe come across that face.”

—Bill Krueger



Stacy Ludlum '03 MR, far left, and exhibit spaces from the Louisville Zoo, above, and the Columbus Zoo, where patrons can see lions through the window of an old airplane in the Heart of Africa region.



A New Museum for Washington’s National Mall

The new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture opens in September, taking up residence in Washington, D.C. Phil Freelon '75 led the 32-consultant team that designed the museum. And we caught up with the Durham, N.C., architect to see what he thinks about his vision being unveiled on the National Mall.

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