

# CHAPTER NEWS

## Becoming the GREATER Philadelphia Chapter of AAZK

Fresh from hosting the 2010 National AAZK Conference, the GPCAAZK wanted a fresh start after years of planning our big event. As many of you know, hosting the National Conference is an intense, yet rewarding experience that can potentially burn out your membership. With this in mind, we spent the months after hosting setting gear for a new approach for 2011 that would make the "G" in our acronym truly stand for "greater." In the time since our change, Philadelphia Zoo keepers have welcomed animal care professionals from the Elmwood Park Zoo, Brandywine Zoo, the Academy of Natural Sciences, the Lehigh Valley Zoo, and the Camden Adventure Aquarium to our meetings. Our goal was and continues to be to enrich our existing members and involve new institutions to be the best darn zookeepers that we can be!



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GREATER PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

We made three basic changes to the way we operate, changes that did involve a vote to change some of our local by-laws.

### 1. Meeting locations and times

Lunch meetings that were previously only held at the Philadelphia Zoo are now held in the evenings after work. Last year we had two of those meetings at the Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown, approximately 15 miles away from the Philadelphia Zoo. All of our meetings are scheduled for the year in advance so that keepers can plan ahead to stay late or travel to a partner institution for our monthly meeting.

### 2. Leadership Structure

Committee meetings posed a challenge for planning after-hours in addition to general membership meetings, so in 2011 we rotated the committee focus at each monthly meeting. For 2012, we have modified this further by dissolving all committees and having a point person for our signature projects such as Bowling for Rhinos, our book sale, and conservation education projects. With this method, we hope that small assignments offered to a larger group of people will help get more people involved and take pressure off of individual people. Additionally, we added a position on our executive board for a fundraising chair and a liaison for the Elmwood Park Zoo

### 3. Attendance Incentives

We typically provide food for our evening meetings, some budgeted and some as planned potlucks. When we order food, we occasionally forgo the standard pizza and go with sandwiches every once and a while. Variety is the spice of life! Our enrichment coordinators periodically have animal toy donations or yard sale discoveries to share with the membership, so on these lucky occasions they are given out as door prizes.

Our new meeting format has just started its second year and we expect some further tweaking to make it work. We are excited about all of our new faces and are looking forward to our future growth.

Wendy Lenhart, GPCAAZK Liaison

Chapter Website: [philadelphiaaazk.org](http://philadelphiaaazk.org)

Check out the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of AAZK Facebook® page too!



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