

Disney zoo profits from animal cruelty

By COURTNEY PENDLETON
The Tattoo

ORLANDO, Fla. — They ought to call Disney's Animal Kingdom the Lovely park of Death.

Despite the publicity, the park is really just an extra-large zoo without cages. The park's main claims to fame are that it's divided into different sections, each showing a different part of the world, and the animals are in their natural habitats.

After hearing all the stories about the animals that died in the park, I went with my family to see what it was really like. The smaller animals, like birds, monkeys, and lizards were in their own little areas.

Instead of the natural barriers and wide open spaces the park promised, I found wire fences separating me from open areas no larger than the average zoo cage. These animals weren't as exotic as I'd thought they'd be.

For the most part they were the animals most zoos have.

After this disappointment, I went to see the Lion King show. This is the one thing in Animal Kingdom that everybody knows about. It's also the one thing in the park that I think is worth seeing. The costumes, audioanimatronic floats, acrobats and music were great.

To top it off, this show is one of the few attractions in the park that doesn't involve animals.

One of the other shows in Animal Kingdom involves trained birds flying around an outdoor stage, performing tricks on command. The highlight of this show is the tropical bird that sang two or three songs.

Call me crazy, but I don't think birds instinctively know how to sing "Camptown Races."

So much for natural setting promised by the park. One of the other main attractions at Animal Kingdom is the safari ride. This is an open tram that travels through an incredibly large area, which is decorated to look like various natural settings.

This ride is supposed to allow visitors the opportunity to see animals in their natural habitat. Unfortunately the animals were hard to see, and there weren't any of the close up sightings that Disney publicized.

My next stop was the petting zoo which advertises unusual animals. I thought that would be cool so I got on the train to go there.

On the way, the train passed numerous concrete buildings with few windows, surrounded by fences. These, our prerecorded guide told us, were where the animals were housed and fed at night. This was not quite the natural habitat Disney's advertising led me to expect.

Before going to the petting zoo, I walked through a building that, among other things, showed how the animals were cared for at Animal Kingdom.

The area that showed how the animals food was prepared displayed dishes of mealworms and various sizes of rabbit pellets. When I asked the man in charge if all the food was based on the animals' natural diets, he looked at me and informed me that he just made the food, he didn't know what it was based on.

Assured that the animals' diets were in fairly incompetent hands, I continued through the building.

I passed the room that showed where animals were nurtured, and found that the park doesn't usually allow the mothers to care for their own young.

Once again, I wasn't seeing the natural setting that Disney had promised me.

The next thing I saw completely floored me. There was an open operating room, complete with a television showing close-ups of the surgery. While I watched, a bird that had just arrived at the park had part of its wing clipped to prevent flying.

This wasn't your average pet owner feather clipping, this was actually cutting a muscle or nerve.

One of the staff members who must have seen that I wasn't too pleased with this scene, came over and assured me that the operation only prevented long distance flying. She also informed me that this type of flying wasn't necessary because the birds are caged at night.

Needless to say, this information didn't comfort me.

After being traumatized, I finally reached the petting zoo. Animal Kingdom's idea of unusual animals turned out to be mostly baby goats.

My final stop at the death-ridden family attraction was Gorilla Falls. This is really just a large path that winds around for a while through a bunch of trees. There were a lot of little birds flying around, and a small building with a glassed in colony of naked mole rats.

Finally, I found the gorillas in Gorilla Falls. That proved absolutely the saddest sight I saw in the entire park.

There was a mother holding her little baby while it slept. It would have been cute, except she was pushed way back into the dark corner between the glass wall and the rest of the gorilla area, while all the tourists tapped on the glass and gawked.

The one thing I learned from my trip to Animal Kingdom was that not even Disney can make a humane zoo, no matter how they publicize it.

All about *The Tattoo*

The Tattoo is published on occasional Mondays in *The Bristol Press*. It is the work of area high school students who contribute their time and talents while learning about journalism from Press reporters Steve Collins and Jackie Majerus, who are volunteer advisors to the group. Our group includes students from Bristol Eastern High School, Bristol Central High School, St. Paul's Catholic High School, Torrington High School and Terryville High School. If you are a high school student and would like to join this dynamic group, give us a call. We meet weekly on Wednesday evenings.

We love to hear from our readers. Call us at 589-5316 or e-mail us at SteveJackie@prodigy.net

We are on the Internet. Check out our *Tattoo* web page at: http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Majerus_Collins

If you are a student, teacher, or other staff member at Bristol Central or Bristol Eastern, feel free to contribute a brief piece to our "Life Under Construction" feature. E-mail it to us at the above address, or send it to us in care of Majerus or Collins at the Press at 99 Main St., Bristol, CT 06010.

Is the sky is falling? No, it's just the construction

Tues., October 13, 1998

I was near the tech wing, typing something. That's simply where the best computers are. It was raining, yet again, and, as I listened to the principal warn us of the flooding,

I noticed that a small square patch of ceiling had fallen, shattered in the hallway. It was soaked and crumbling in its pile. You may take from these things what you will...

— Joe Wilbur, junior, Bristol Eastern

Wed., October 14, 1998

Think. Think. Think. Writing can be so difficult at times. I'm sitting in study hall on this miserable Tuesday morning writing a piece for the construction journal. I begin, "I haven't been hear-

High schools get a face lift

By JESSICA NORTON
The Tattoo

Many students and faculty are upset over the construction at Bristol Eastern and Bristol Central high schools. But few realize the work going on backstage.

The much-needed renovations at both high schools will take two or three years to complete and bring the buildings up to current fire, electric and other codes, said Elia Gontzes, project manager for the Tratanos Contracting Co. of Brooklyn, N.Y., the general contractor.

"The building was up to code when it was originally built," Gontzes said, but today that code is inadequate for new technology and handicapped accessibility.

While construction is going well, it is behind in schedule due to a delay in signing the necessary contracts last summer.

"Eastern has about eight or nine phases while Central has eight. Each phase covers about 16 to 18 rooms at a time and

both projects are similar," said Gontzes. The phases involving heavy construction are mostly taking place in the summers to avoid problems.

"We hope to have the first

nasium floors that have new foundations and drainage to insure that they will last, the moving of administrative offices, and the latest in mechanical, electrical, and technological

construction is putting in a new boiler/heating system. It will allow the use of new heating valves and create a new hot water unit as well, said Spencer.

While the renovations have caused trouble and confusion to students and staff alike, Spencer said both have been understanding and supportive.

"I appreciate the kindness for understanding the inconvenience," he said. He also said that extra rooms in both schools have been a "blessing" and without them much movement would have been impossible.

"I have worked in schools where they had no extra rooms," said Gontzes, "it's terrible."

One of the few problems has been with possible safety issues involving some students crossing construction boundaries.

"Kids should take notice of the construction going on," said Spencer. "The last thing we want to see is someone getting hurt."

"Use common sense," said Gontzes. "Don't cross the boundaries."

'Kids should take notice of the construction going on,' said Leo Spencer, in charge of the project.

phase completed by December", said Gontzes. The English hall at Eastern should be ready for Christmas.

By the end of the school year, the English, social studies and biology halls in Eastern's northwest corner "from upstairs to down" should be finished, said Leo Spencer, who acts as a representative for the Board of Education and works with and oversees the construction.

The renovations at both schools will ultimately involve tremendous improvements. Among the changes, said Spencer, will be two new gym-

changes.

Also in store for both schools are new libraries, computer labs, science laboratories, and upgrades to the music wings, art wings and athletic fields. Central's fields are nearly done already.

Another new addition, Spencer said, is that the schools will be "semi air-conditioned". This means the air system will be adjusted to a "tempered air system" not to "cool the building from 80 to 70 degrees" but to "take down the mugginess."

One of the largest parts of the

Central gets religion in *Godspell*

By IRENE SITILIDES
and SUZANNE GREGORCZYK
The Tattoo

When *Godspell* is performed at Bristol Central High School next month, student actors will tell the story of Jesus through humor and music.

"I love this play because you can improvise a lot," said senior Crystal Bilodeau, "and I wanted to do it because the music is absolutely beautiful."

Although the director, James Smith, is in charge of all final decisions, the cast works together to create many of the more imaginative scenes. They take everyday situations and turn them into funny and sometimes ironic skits.

The play, which ran on Broadway for years, aims to entertain the audience while teaching about the Bible by showing Jesus journeying through its stories. The actors, including junior Matt Martin as Jesus, combine short scenes with humor to depict their own versions of the Bible's life lessons.

The bond between the actors — and the respect they have for each others' talents — was evident during a recent rehearsal.

Even though the cast consists of seven seniors and one junior who have worked together on previous performances, they welcomed two newcomers, junior Jason Sirianni and sophomore Stephanie Landon, with open arms.

The apparent closeness within the cast makes for a better play.

Bilodeau, who has been involved in performing arts since she was a freshman, will star in the musical as one of her two final



AMANDA LEHMERT / The Tattoo
Godspell cast members front, from left, Kate Wollenberg, Melanie Houle, Nicole Roy and Stephanie Landon at a recent rehearsal.

theatrical performances as a Central student. Bilodeau and the other actors laughed frequently and appeared to enjoy themselves during a rehearsal.

Although on opening night the actors hope their performance will appear to be effortless and natural, it takes an enormous amount of time and effort to perform a musical of this stature. The cast plans to practice for eight to nine hours weekly.

All their dedication should pay off in the end.

On November 20, 21 and 22 don't be surprised if you leave Central's auditorium doors feeling awestruck with the talent and ambition of these 10 amazing high school students.

Tickets will be available at Ink Spot Printing, 43 Middle St., starting Nov. 2. They will also be on sale in Central's lobby from 6 to 9 p.m. on Mondays.

Tickets are \$7 for students and seniors, \$9 for adults.

Horrors! It's the real thing

By JOE WILBUR
The Tattoo

I'll admit it. I'm impressed. I stood in a museum and I was impressed and it had nothing to do with Jackson Pollock or Andy Warhol, was simple and was clear, and I really just enjoyed it.

I'm speaking of Cortlandt Hull's Witch's Dungeon Classic Horror Museum, open briefly this month in honor of Halloween. Never mind the Pollocks, this is art.

I've been guilty, in my time, of turning my nose up at mainstream attractions in the name of a true and deeper artistic appreciation. I'm not proud of it, I confess. However, I realize the error of my ways and I have to tell you that what's true and pure about art is exemplified better by Hull and his monsters than anything anyone can do with a blank canvas and royal blue paint between his toes.

Hull is something that we scarcely see these days, some-

thing that I wish that we'd see more. He is simply genuine.

I'll admit it, I went to the museum, reporter's pad in hand, looking for the "real story." All right, I thought, there's something nasty and twisted and impure about all this, or else it's just a small shack that goes over well with children.

What I found was a man dedicated to his craft, dedicated to illusion, to, as he was instructed by Vincent Price, "making the unreal real."

He charges fifty cents for children, a dollar toward admission for adults. The incentive isn't cash, and it isn't recognition.

The man has spent a large portion of his life, and most of his money, I would imagine, procuring rare classic horror memorabilia...you have to wonder why.

He does it, it's clear to me, because it's something innocent and fun, something not imposing or corrupted. Children squeal with delight, gloriously frozen

with terror before Frankenstein's Monster or Count Dracula. It's clean and without complication, moral points mapped out, highlighted, and who can't hate that?

We fail to see, I think, in this

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sort of childhood fantasy, the skill of the true artists at work, suspending disbelief.

I've seen the sort of work that Hull puts into recreating these things, and it's really no child's picnic. This is grueling stuff, and this takes the sort of talent most of us can only dream about, but often just don't see.

The art is no less valid, no less fantastic because the work is horror. That sort of misconception and careless generalization is just dangerous.

Hull has done magnificent things with his Dungeon, and, given the space and the funding,

could begin something very unique and worthwhile.

The trouble, it seems, is getting people like me, people wondering about the real story and without an appreciation for his efforts because of their genre, to see the merit there. The potential is there, potential for something like nothing else, and in Bristol.

It's potential for tourism, it's potential for the sharing of film appreciation, and it's up to us at this point to recognize that potential.

Cortlandt Hull realizes that Bristol is a small town, that this sort of project would probably go over better elsewhere, in some college town.

He wants to keep it in Bristol, in his hometown, wants to be true to that. That's genuine. He needs space, he needs money, and he's having difficulty getting either.

He's done all he can for his cause. From here, I think it's simply up to us.

Thurs., October 15, 1998

On my way to drama I noticed couples in the hallway busy groping and couples fighting in their raised, shrill voices and I remembered that we were reading Biloxi Blues. I wondered who would volunteer to read the part of the prostitute and who would taunt her for it. I passed a large and rather unattractive, sealed off section of the building. Renovations. They'd covered the partitions and thin walls with student artwork, photographs.

"Cute," I thought, and knew that they were trying. You have to give them credit where you can. They're starting asbestos removal today, ceilings and floors, at 2:05. I have after school activities. I'm suddenly very afraid to have after school activities. There's something wrong there, VERY, VERY wrong.

— Joe Wilbur, junior, Bristol Eastern

— Merissa Mastropiero, junior, Bristol Eastern