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Elephant Sanctuary



PAWS

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Toronto Star
Editor

To The Editor of the Toronto Star,

I have read your April 20, 2012, article titled, "The Toronto Zoo's departing elephants have squashed its accreditation. Thanks, Bob Barker!" with some dismay and profound confusion.

To blame a benefactor who is donating a million dollars to the city and the zoo to assist in correcting a blatant, controversial blunder created by AZA and its pitifully inadequate standards, is incredibly rude, and economically foolish.

If AZA's standards were meaningful, the zoo would have lost its accreditation years ago for keeping multiple elephants in a barren, confined space with no opportunity to express basic elephant behavior. The elephant exhibit at the zoo has been a source of embarrassment to the city for years, and the city council should be commended for the decision to close the exhibit and relocate the elephants. The "elephantine mistake" has been allowing the zoo's "expert staff" and the AZA to make the decisions, when they created the problem in the first place by allowing the substandard conditions to continue over many years, resulting in the deaths of several elephants.

Mr. Barker has not made a pet project of securing the Toronto Zoo's elephants, he simply offered financial assistance for their translocation to PAWS. Basic rules of etiquette indicate at least a thank you note is appropriate for a donation of any size; Mr. Barker's generous donation deserves a huge vote of gratitude from everyone in the city.

Conversely, if Mr. Barker decides to withdraw his offer, and he should, the city and the taxpayers who support the zoo will be left with a million dollar financial burden which I doubt AZA will assist in defraying. They will certainly be unable to finance the cost of air transport which zoo "experts" have insisted is essential.

Losing AZA accreditation may be the first step on the road to saving the zoo; if not, they can always apply again next year after Bob Barker and his persistent "Come on down" blandishments have disappeared.

Pat Derby,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Derby".

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