

Kids Korner

Kids Enter Mini-Milk Mustache Contest



Amanda Schrecongost from Creekside shows off her milk moustache. The 3½ -year-old said that she drinks milk because, "It's my favorite and it makes my tum-my tickle!"

EMLENTON (Cambria Co.) — Picture this: The youngest Americans — kids, ages 1 to 5 — aren't getting enough calcium in their diet.

To help parents literally "get the picture" about this essential nutrition information, the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program teamed up to host a regional Mini Milk Mustache Photo Contest.

PDPP partnered with the Pennsylvania WIC program to extend the How to Grow a Healthy Child Campaign to teach moms about milk's critical role in their own health and the growth and development of their young children. Families were invited to turn their "half pints" into the next milk mustache model by snapping a photo of their child wearing a milk mustache and writing the child's answer to the question "Why do you drink milk?"

Pittsburgh Steeler Carnell Lake, campaign spokesperson, was on-hand to present awards to the following pint-sized milk mustache celebrities: Gabriel Hugh Clements, 21 months, New Castle; Michael William Debruyne, 2, White Oak; De'Naja Richardson, 4, Pittsburgh; Amanda Schrecongost, 3, Creekside; and Kalena Mae Zeigler, 4, Ellwood City.

The winners will be entered into the national contest sponsored by the National Dairy Council, Milk Processor Education Program, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. The national winner will become the next milk mustache model, joining the ranks of milk mustache celebrities including child star Jonathan Lipnicki and Bart Simpson. The national winner will be announced in April 1999.

Get To Know 'Flighty' Neighbors

ITHACA, N.Y. — If you see your neighbor standing in her backyard waving a feather in the air, don't dial 911. She's probably participating in the Cornell Nest Box Network (CNBN), a continent-wide project of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in which participants get to watch birds!

CNBN participants gather information about bluebirds,

chickadees, wood ducks, and other birds that use nest boxes. They share their data with scientists at the Cornell Lab, who analyze them and share the results with participants and the scientific community and conservation groups

"Learning as much as we can about these fascinating birds helps us make responsible conservation decisions," says Dr.

David Winkler, associate professor of ecology and systematics at Cornell University and a scientist.

One nest box is all it takes! CNBN provides the details you need to find a good nest box and put in the best location. The research kit also explains how to collect information on a number of different topics, such as clutch size and feathers used in nests.

"We learn more every year as CNBN nest-box monitors send in their data," says Tracey Kast, a CNBN research biologist. So far, they've learned that in 1997 some or all of the nestlings fledged in 72% of tree swallow and eastern bluebird nests—an encouraging rate of success. Early results also revealed that tree swallows in northern latitudes laid more eggs per clutch than birds nesting in southern latitudes.

"We need people from all across the continent to collect data, so we can continue to get these kinds of broad-scale

results," says Kast. "We would like to see every nest-box owner in North America participate in CNBN."

The CNBN research kit includes information how to build or purchase a good nest box as well as where to place it. It also explains when participants can expect their new "neighbors" to move in and which species to expect. How and when to monitor the nest box, how to collect valid scientific data, and how to share these data with Lab scientists are also explained in the research kit. Software and data forms are included in the research kit.

In return for becoming a partner with CNBN scientists, participants receive a subscription to *Birdscope*, the Lab's quarterly newsletter which contains CNBN results and features engaging articles about birds and other citizen-science projects. Participants also can become part of an e-mail discussion group that allows them to

interact with other nest-box "landlords" and CNBN scientists.

A \$20 participation fee (\$15 for renewals) helps offset the cost of materials.

People of all ages, including individuals, families, and youth groups are contributing valuable information to the study of birds from their own backyards. Carol Cash, a CNBN citizen scientist, says, "My husband built nest boxes over the years, and we always enjoyed watching them from a distance. Now, by participating in CNBN, we've learned so much about nesting activity. It has been a wonderful experience for both of us, and we look forward to another season with CNBN."

For more information contact Eric Cromwell at (717) 456-9106 or ecrom@starix.net. To sign up for CNBN or other bird-watching projects call the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at (800) 843-BIRD or visit their web site at <http://birds.cornell.edu>.

Smart Stuff

WITH TWIG WALKINGSTICK

Why do gorillas beat their chest?

Chest beating, noisy gorillas might seem angry and mean. But they're really shy and timid animals.

Scientists have gone into the jungle to watch these gorillas in their natural setting. They found that, although gorillas are a relatively quiet animal, they hoot, rumble, laugh, belch and grunt to communicate. Because families can't always see each other as they search for food in the dense rainforest, sound helps them keep tabs on each other. The scientists also discovered the gorillas communicate visually — yawning, tucking in their lips and sticking out their tongues all mean different things.

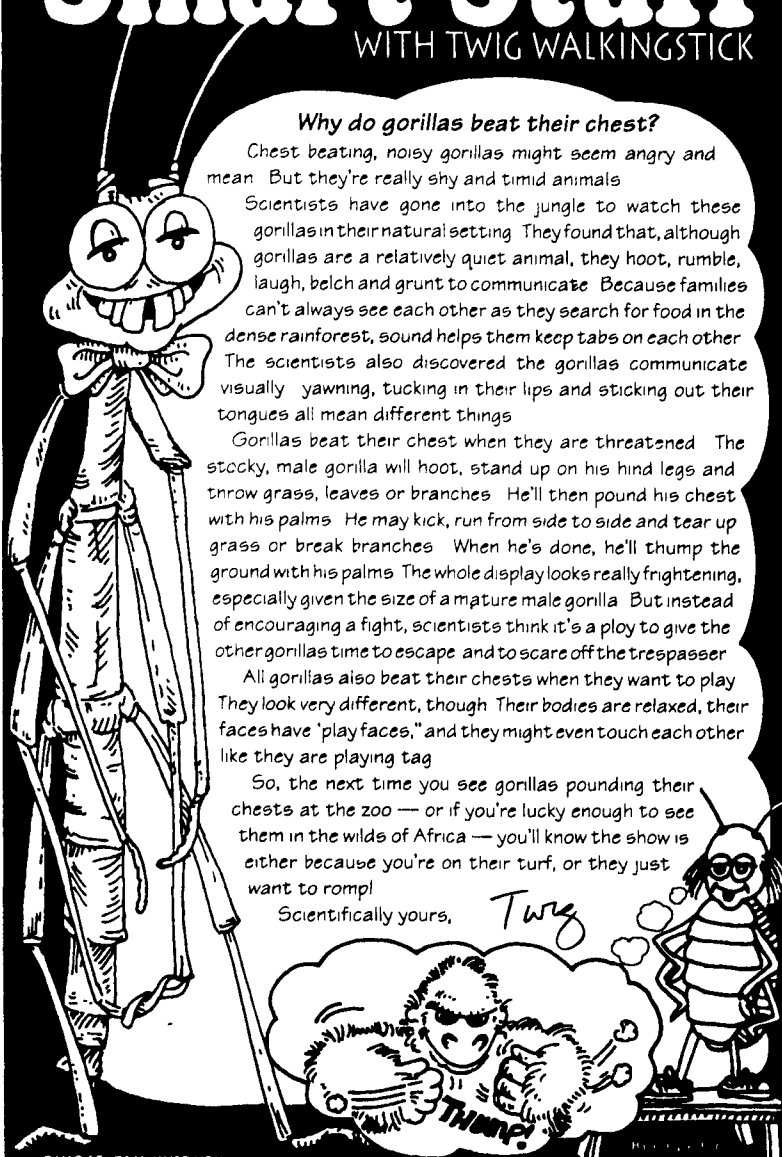
Gorillas beat their chest when they are threatened. The stocky, male gorilla will hoot, stand up on his hind legs and throw grass, leaves or branches. He'll then pound his chest with his palms. He may kick, run from side to side and tear up grass or break branches. When he's done, he'll thump the ground with his palms. The whole display looks really frightening, especially given the size of a mature male gorilla. But instead of encouraging a fight, scientists think it's a ploy to give the other gorillas time to escape and to scare off the trespasser.

All gorillas also beat their chests when they want to play. They look very different, though. Their bodies are relaxed, their faces have "play faces," and they might even touch each other like they are playing tag.

So, the next time you see gorillas pounding their chests at the zoo — or if you're lucky enough to see them in the wilds of Africa — you'll know the show is either because you're on their turf, or they just want to romp!

Scientifically yours,

Twig



The Honorable Sam Hayes, Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture, poses with Harrisburg area children and "Patty Melt," the Pennsylvania Beef Council's new costume character at a recent Farm-City Day celebration at the state Department of Agriculture. "Patty" will be visiting more than 75 schools throughout the state to deliver a food safety message to children. The Beef School Food Safety Initiative is a program funded by the \$1 per head Beef Checkoff.