

THE SAN DIEGO ZOO EYES FLORIDA CANYON

by Richard Amero

In *The Good Old Days* (1962) realtor Oscar Cotton expressed a view toward Balboa Park that has become the majority view. When asked what should be done to the empty Exposition buildings put up for the 1915-16 and 1935-36 Expositions, he replied sarcastically:

"Yes. By all means, tear the buildings down. . . Make the grounds into a park. Tear down the House of Hospitality. . . . Tear down the fine arts gallery, the California Building, the Ford Bowl . . . and, while you are at it, tear down the Cabrillo Bridge and then put the whole five hundred acres into grass and trees."

Cotton's acceptance of man-made accumulations in Balboa Park took on the status of a myth which people accepted hook, line and sinker.

Cotton's belief that the juggernaut of progress had improved a park that was "covered with greasewood, rocks and hardpan" is shared by most San Diegans.

Dissenting from this one-track view, Mary B. Coulston, Samuel Parsons, Jr., George Cooke, T. S. Brandegee, Kate Sessions and George W. Marston thought that there was a natural substratum to Balboa Park (known as City Park before 1910) that was worth keeping. This was the land and the flora and fauna upon it that nature had developed over centuries. The degree of enthusiasm with which these people venerated indigenous surroundings differed. Coulston, Parsons and Cooke wanted to maintain existing plant species while Brandegee, Sessions and Marston wanted to transplant species from Baja California, Australia and South Africa, lands whose climate and soil were similar to San Diego's.

Coulston, an immigrant from New York City, was so captivated by the foliage and blooms of the chaparral on the east side that she proclaimed that introduced cultivated plants were "tame and poor" compared to the wild garden in the park. Tell that to Kate Sessions who made her living by selling "introduced cultivated plants"!

Brandegee, Sessions and Marston were not one-hundred percenters. They knew that the untouched land that realtors and developers excoriated had pristine charm. In his *History of San Diego City Parks* (1936), Marston described the park he knew in his youth:

"In the springtime there were abundant flowers, shooting stars, Spanish violets, lupins, mimulus, mallows, penstemons and hyacinths, with large patches of white popcorn flowers. In most parts the chaparral was dense and the native cactus flourished. We have some other things now instead of cactus and coyotes, but how much civilization has destroyed!"

Florida Canyon was one of three canyons that divided City Park into segments that made it difficult for people to go from one area to another. If people on foot found the going rough,

people in carriages and automobiles found the going to be impossible. To overcome these separations, Parsons planned roads and bridges that would cross over or through natural barriers.

Pound Canyon, on the west side of the park, showed the most drastic changes. The name "Pound" discloses part of the reason for these changes as the canyon was used as a place to keep stray dogs and cattle. Being closer to human settlement than Slaughter House and Switzer Canyons on the east side of the park, city residents made use of the soil in the canyon for agriculture and for home gardens, dug artesian wells and deposited their rubbish in the canyon, and allowed cattle and sheep to graze in the canyon and on the mesas above.

Slaughterhouse Canyon, as the name implied, was one of several canyons in the town that were used for killing animals. It was unsightly and unsanitary. In 1885, Slaughterhouse Canyon became Powder House Canyon after officials began worrying about the ammunition and powder that merchants and residents were keeping in their stores and homes.

Unlike Pound and Powder House canyons that ran north-south, Switzer Canyon ran diagonally northwest-northeast on the east side of the park. It joined Powder House Canyon near the south middle border of the park. Switzer Canyon was named after E. D. Switzer who occupied a five-acre farm at the downtown extremity of the canyon. The park portion of the canyon had been used as an Indian rancheria, the site for a Pest House, and as a conduit for carriages and for the Belt Line Railway, which was to connect to East San Diego and points beyond.

Children and adults hunted for rabbits, coyotes and quail in the park's canyons. Exhilarated by the thrill of the chase, they occasionally shot bystanders. Mexicans harvested prickly pear cactus and dug up the roots of manzanitas and other shrubs on the east side which they used for firewood.

In 1899, Mayor Edwin Capps was the first of many people who promoted the use of Florida and Switzer Canyons as sites for lakes, reservoirs and dams. A dam that had been built in Switzer Canyon collapsed during the torrential rains of January 1916, causing a major inundation of downtown San Diego.

Soon after Samuel Parsons, Jr. was hired in 1902 to prepare planting and circulation plans for the park, the powder magazine in Powder House Canyon was abandoned. Fascinated by the flora in the canyon, Parsons said the canyon should remain as it was; then, unaccountably, he planned a road that would allow carriages to go from downtown San Diego to residents and businesses that were being built north of the park.

Parsons was effusive in expressing his admiration for the natural conditions in the park he had been hired to improve. The following passage is typical:

"The most charming of rambles . . . may be made by walks, creeping along the brink, down and across slopes of canyons. The convenience of vehicles is enticing enough, but a realization of the deep-seated, inherent charm of the place may be had only by loitering along edges of great declivities, and losing oneself in inner folds of canyons, where roads may not be made to go."

Recognizing the aesthetic as well as environmental suitability of low native shrubs to level and inclined surfaces, Parsons declared:

"If proper care is taken of the native shrubbery now growing in the park, there will be comparatively little need of adding more than is indicated in the plan."

And

"In the matter of planting, experience constantly deepens the impression that none but trees, shrubs, vines, and flowering plants that are indigenous, or that will grow readily, should be used."

After the Panama-California Exposition of 1915-16 transformed the west side of Balboa Park, with a bridge crossing Pound (renamed Cabrillo) Canyon leading to buildings on the central mesa, Powder House and Switzer Canyons were considered vestibules to the park's main attractions. Through default rather than through conscious effort, both canyons retained their native appearance. Pershing Drive, so named in honor of General "Blackjack" Pershing, followed the course of Switzer Canyon before diverging to come out on the northeast side of the park, in accordance with plans created by Samuel Parsons and only tangentially modified by George Cooke in 1907-08 and John Nolen in 1925.

Powder House Canyon was crossed with roads and bridges. Otherwise, it was relatively undisturbed. Since no attempts were made to transform the canyon, as had been done in Cabrillo Canyon, it kept its native flora. However, the native plants were threatened by non-native species whose seeds were carried by wind, rain and bird droppings.

The chiseled west slope of Powder House Canyon was different from the serrated east slope. This contrast was due to unrecorded human excavations. The creation of a golf course that ran from the north border to the vicinity of today's Natural History Museum, the laying out of a camp by U.S. Army cavalrymen doing duty at the 1915 Exposition, the building of a railroad, the relocation of Park Boulevard, the effects of floods and of drainage, and the illegal excavation of dirt contributed to the west slopes deformed appearance.

Demands built for the construction of a through truck road in Powder House Canyon that would follow the path of Samuel Parsons' projected road. The road was finally built in 1931, but the Park Board forestalled its use by trucks by declaring it a "park road." On October 13, 1943, the Park Board changed the name of the road to Florida Drive.

Ignoring the road, Councilman Frank W. Seifert clamored for a water reclamation dam in Florida Canyon. His proposals were much debated, but no action was taken because of costs, the likelihood of damage to built-up sections downstream should the dam break, and the danger of pollution of drinking water from lines carrying irrigation water from the dam.

Realtors and proponents of change often described Florida Canyon as "undeveloped land." So it was considered by the Harland Bartholomew Planners from St. Louis, who prepared a Balboa Park Master Plan in 1960. The term implied a defect, that the City of San Diego should correct.

No one had good words to say about the land as land or recalled the praise it had received from Mary Coulston, Samuel Parsons, Jr., and George W. Marston.

The Bartholomew planners called for the preservation of the native chaparral on the slopes of Florida Canyon as planting of other materials "would serve no useful purpose." Their recommendation was not based on any liking for native plants. Rather they thought their presence would set off the superiority of "the picturesque man-made landscape" that came later.

It was inevitable that proponents of progress should look upon Florida Canyon as a site where their pet projects could be located. These included a baseball stadium (1953), a civic auditorium (1954), a golf course (1955), a municipal theater (1957), a spill-over parking lot (1958), a replacement San Diego High School (1959), a site for picnic and archery facilities (1960), a solid waste landfill (1961), a day camp (1970), a replacement for the Starlight Outdoor Amphitheater (1982), the transfer to another canyon in Balboa Park of the Florida Canyon native plant trails (1983), and, of course, the perennial dam.

After Rachel Carson wrote *The Silent Spring* in 1962, the publication of the *Whole Earth Catalog* in 1968, and the beginning celebration of Earth Day in 1970, people became aware of the value of undeveloped nature. The creation of the Quail Botanic Garden in 1957 pointed toward beautiful natural plants that could thrive in harmony with local conditions. Helen Witham, an assistant curator of botany at the San Diego Natural History Museum, (who later became Helen Chamlee) joined the cause. She was aided by young people. Suddenly nature conservation became the rage.

Championing the concept of a native botanic garden, Chamlee declared:

"Real growing plants that can be seen, touched and smelled are more understandable than pictures, description or pressed specimens."

The San Diego Zoo in 1970 inadvertently advanced the conservation of Florida Canyon when it proposed converting the west slope into parking for 2,000 automobiles, in addition to the parking for 2,463 automobiles in the Zoo's regular parking lots. Representatives from the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the California Native Plant Association, and Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 joined Helen Chamlee in protesting the Zoo's encroachment. This combined resistance alerted city officials to the problem and led to the commissioning of Steve Halsey in 1975 to produce a master plan for Florida Canyon.

Other than Helen Chamlee's writings and the publication of Ian McHarg's *Design With Nature* in 1969, Halsey had little to go on except what was actually in the canyon. He compiled lists of the flora in the canyon, described its topography, and recommended that vegetation on the east slope be preserved; that demonstration gardens and teaching areas be created on the west slope; that an elevated crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists be laid out from Park Boulevard and Zoo Place to Morley Field; that Florida Drive be closed to traffic; and that rest room and parking facilities be laid out at north and south ends of the garden preserve. Native plants and endangered species would be planted in appropriate areas, including red monkey flowers, yellow poppies, white

buckwheat, yellow and white sage, tiny purple snapdragons. and endangered species, such as San Clemente Island scrub, San Miguel Otay chaparral, and Southern oak.

The City of San Diego did nothing to implement Halsey's recommendations. The Natural History Museum, which one would think would be an ally of local habitat preservation, was preoccupied with its own problems. Once more, the plants in Florida Canyon were left to take care of themselves.

When the U.S. Navy asked for approximately 36 acres of the lower section of Florida Canyon in exchange for approximately 39 acres of Inspiration Point, both in Balboa Park, advocates of untrammelled nature emerged. Despite their vigorous and, in retrospect, quixotic efforts, the U.S. Navy acquired the land it wanted in 1979 by court-ordered condemnation. Defeated, disgruntled, and cowed the defenders of the canyon lapsed into silence. The Florida Canyon area, which before the confiscation consisted of about 160 acres, had been reduced to about 120 acres.

Since 1973 the Canyoneers, a voluntary branch of the Natural History Museum, have conducted tours of Florida Canyon on weekends. Even so, the condition of the canyon has deteriorated. Slopes on east and west sides are badly eroded. Trails, winding in all directions, have destroyed plants and compressed the hardpan. Homosexuals, transients, dog owners, and students from nearby Roosevelt Junior High School visited or infested the canyon. There was nothing there to attract visitors, who, in any case, were afraid of being molested.

While Florida Canyon has fallen into a waste land, the native gardens in the Quail Botanic Garden and the San Diego Wild Animal Park are flourishing. They show home owners how to create interesting dry gardens with drought-tolerant plants, thus lessening the need for scarce water.

A Master Plan for Balboa Park, prepared by Steve Estrada in 1989, and an East Mesa Precise Plan, prepared by Wallace, Roberts and Todd in 1992, brought the condition and fate of Florida Canyon to the attention of concerned citizens. The canyon had not changed, but, at least plans existed telling what should be done.

Estrada's plan continued Halsey's recommendations with the addition of "hiking, bicycle, and jogging trails . . . throughout the canyon area" which misconstrued Halsey's recommendation for a pedestrian and bicycle path spanning the canyon and failed to take into account the inevitable damage such multiple-use trails would produce. Wallace, Roberts and Todd stressed the fragility of native plants and the need for linking rather than separating habitat areas, a linkage that would encompass the entire east mesa instead of being confined to the canyon. They were more aware of how eco-systems function than were Halsey and Estrada and less inclined to set up special demonstration gardens. Unlike Halsey, they would restrict the vegetation "to indigenous species that would commonly and naturally occupy this area." To reduce disturbance to animals, plants and soil, they recommended the construction of elevated walkways—a feature of the native plant section of the Quail Botanic Garden—and the construction of culverts under roadways to allow for animal movement.

In disregard of these plans, the San Diego Park Department in 1997 accepted the offer of volunteers and of AmeriCorps workers to improve trails, which could be used by walkers, joggers and by people riding mountain bicycles. Since the Park Department has allowed mountain bikes on trails at the Mission Trails Regional Park, Department employees probably saw no contradiction in allowing bikers to use Florida Canyon. The Velodrome Association, located on a crest above the east slopes of the canyon, offered to teach bicyclists etiquette.

Bicyclists are not allowed on trails at the Quail Botanic Garden, at the San Diego Wild Animal Park, and at the Bayside Native Plant Trail at the Cabrillo National Monument. Custodians of these gardens know the devastation that would result from bicyclists barreling down paths, but such considerations are far from the minds of San Diego Park Department people.

In late 1997 and early 1998, the San Diego Zoo revived its plan to occupy the west slope of Florida Canyon. This time the plan was grander and more destructive than the 1970 plan. It called for the construction of four six-level garages for 8,000 vehicles to replace the Zoo's parking lot and to enable the Zoo to expand to the edge of Park Boulevard. In the past the Zoo has enjoyed the support of the San Diego Union-Tribune, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, the Central Balboa Park Association, and of its members, now numbering over 220,000 households representing over 400,000 individuals. In an equivocal statement to the San Diego Daily Transcript, saying that he would support the Zoo's plan, Mick Hager, director of the Natural History Museum, added:

"My feeling is that (the Society's ideas are) certainly worth looking at. We could once and for all solve problems with a parking structure."

Since it is unlikely that Florida Drive will ever be closed, the future of Florida Canyon as a native preserve calls for examination. Proposals by Halsey and Wallace, Roberts and Todd should be evaluated for their practicality in light of the City's reluctance to allocate money for the canyon's improvement. At the most, more people should be invited to visit the canyon, members of garden clubs should take over the management of its planting (as has been done at Griffith Park, Los Angeles), and its trails should be surfaced with crushed rock to impede the movement of wheeled vehicles, to prevent erosion and to allow nearby plants to grow.

As it is not advisable in a public park to allow nature to take its course, irrigation pipes should be installed, invasive plant species removed, and native plants kept at a minimum level of conditioning as is done at the Quail Botanic Gardens and the San Diego Wild Animal Park. If fires for seed germination are allowed, they should be regulated.

By harkening to the advice of Mary Coulston, Kate Sessions, T. S. Brandegee, and Samuel Parsons, Jr., and the ecological awareness of Wallace, Roberts, and Todd, Florida Canyon can be restored to a facsimile of its native beauty. Unlike the west side of Balboa Park, the canyon would not be an Eastern-style garden of grass and trees, nor, as are the central mesa and the San Diego Zoo, a paradise of luxuriant sub-tropical plants. It would, however, be an area where native plants would grow at all seasons of the year, offering viewers a glimpse of past conditions as they persist into the present. This, as the poet Robert Frost said, is our land:

"Such as she was, such as she would become."

The San Diego Zoo and Its Place in Balboa Park (revised 12/3/1999)

by Richard W. Amero

Having generated considerable opposition to its proposed expansion into Florida Canyon, the Zoological Society reversed positions and in the Spring of 1999 unveiled a plan to erect a five-level parking structure, two above and three below ground, that would provide more than 4,500 parking spaces on the site of a 6.1 acre War Memorial Building, put up in 1950, and used by veterans of San Diego City and County, disabled individuals, and the City of San Diego for public meetings and naturalization ceremonies. Visitors would have to pay for parking. Plans to expand zoo attractions into the present 25-acre, 3,500 space parking lot would remain the same. In addition, the Zoological Society would incorporate the existing miniature railroad inside an expanded Children's Zoo, operate the existing Carousel outside the zoo boundaries, construct another parking structure for employees off Richmond Street, and convert an archery range near Cabrillo Bridge into a preserve for growing browse for animals. The entire package would bring the zoo's total acreage to 147.5, or an increase of 24.5 acres. If this plan should fail the Zoological Society has a fallback position; namely the construction of a parking structure on the site of the former Naval Hospital at the south end of the park with a monorail connection to the zoo entrance and another to the proposed downtown ballpark for the Padres, which by providing a parking place for baseball fans cannot be said to assuage the zoo's problems.

The issue has yet to be resolved (August 1, 1999). This writer's contribution to the debate is presented in the following essay:

The San Diego Zoo occupies a special place in San Diego in terms of its local appeal and its non-local celebrity. To many it is the number one symbol of San Diego. It is the first topic someone who has heard of the City is likely to ask about. It would be pointless to claim it is the best Zoo in the United States or in the world. Nonetheless, it can be ranked as one of the world's best zoos with or without the Wild Animal Park that acts as a counterpart to the centrally-located Zoo. The Wild Animal Park is within the sprawling territory of San Diego though it is closer to downtown Escondido than to downtown San Diego. If a zoo be considered as a progressive, scientific and humane institution the Wild Animal Park is ahead of the San Diego Zoo, which is handicapped by a plan that grew out of a past when standards for the care of animals were perfunctory and love of animals was at a sentimental and unscientific level. (Vicki Croke, *The Modern Ark*, Avon Books, Inc., 1997, pp. 87-89). In 1916, J. C. Thompson, a surgeon in the U. S. Navy seriously proposed that school children should feed the animals in the upcoming San Diego Zoo the remains of their lunches! (San Diego Sun, December 30, 1916)

The Zoo existed in Balboa Park before the Panama-California Exposition of 1915. There were paddocks for animals and birds scattered about the park, in level land and in canyons. Visitations were not restricted as the animals were meant to be seen; however fences kept people from getting too close. Dogs were another matter. A domesticated Airedale massacred seven deer in the deer paddock at the Pepper Grove Picnic Grounds in 1923, leading to demands that the Board

of Park Commissioners prevent the bringing of dogs into the park with and without leash (San Diego Union, October 15, 1923).

The Board of Park Commissioners was not prepared to assume custody of animals left over from the defunct Wonderland Park menagerie in Ocean Beach so Doctor Harry Wegeforth, who had been fired as a city health inspector (San Diego Union, December 22, 1912), stepped in. Wegeforth, described in the San Diego Sun as an "important hunter" (San Diego Sun, December 30, 1916), was a clever campaigner who had a talent for reaching the heartstrings and purse strings of San Diegans. He insisted that children should always be admitted free, claimed the zoo's purpose was to entertain and to educate children and published results of straw polls of children on propositions relating to the zoo a day or so before adults voted on the measures (San Diego Union, March 31, 1925). The U. S. Navy aided and abetted the Zoo as ships coming into port usually had a supply of exotic animals from foreign lands they were eager to dispose of. Acting under orders from Colonel Joseph H. Pendleton, U. S. Marines stationed in Nicaragua scoured the countryside to find exotic animals, reptiles and birds to ship to the San Diego Zoo. (San Diego Union, October 15, 1924)

The first plan in 1917 was to locate the Zoo in Pepper Grove and on the east slopes of Gold Gulch Canyon, where a small menagerie existed for the entertainment of children and picnickers.. The greater number of animals would be local species. The unsuspecting animals were referred to as "game" and regulations for hunting them were to be posted in front of their cages. (San Diego Sun, December 30, 1916) In 1919-20, the zoo moved into an arm of Cabrillo Canyon west of a then existing five-acre "Indian Village and Painted Desert," a relic of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition used for many years by the San Diego Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The Zoological Society had applied for 200 acres; however, voter approval of an allotment of 17.42 acres, on December 7, 1920, to the Board of Education for the construction of Roosevelt Junior High School and other depletions, mostly for highway construction, bring the zoo's 1999 acreage to 123. In December 1921, Ellen Browning Scripps donated \$9,000 for fencing to enclose grounds and animals, thus allowing the charging of admission fees to everybody except children, who were admitted free. Dr. Nathaniel Slaymaker, who it was claimed had designed zoological gardens in the east, drew up landscape plans. The zoo extended toward the edge of Cabrillo Canyon on the west, El Prado on the south, and Richmond Street and Roosevelt Junior High School on the north. As the zoo leases the land it occupies from the City of San Diego Property Department, voter approval was not required for its occupation of free public park lands. The current 55-year lease runs out on January 1, 2034. The city can terminate the lease on 30 days prior notice. The lease grants the zoo the right to charge "reasonable parking fees" in a parking lot at the east end of the gardens to defray the cost of the "public parking facility."

In its formative 1922-1923 years, when the San Diego zoo went from 32 antiquated animal cages on the east side of Park Boulevard to approximately 150 acres from Alameda Street (today Zoo Drive) west to the east slopes of Cabrillo Canyon, six people deserved credit for the Zoo's extraordinary growth. These were Ellen Browning Scripps, Dr. Harry Wegeforth, John D. Spreckels, Frank H. Buck and Mr. and Mrs. Patrick O'Rourke. While previous writers have placed Dr. Wegeforth first in this list, it was Miss Scripps who, through her cash donation of \$57,382, got the zoo going. Of this munificent sum, \$15,000 was allotted for a director's salary

for three years at \$5,000 a year and \$12,382 was expended on a flying cage, \$11,000 on dams, \$10,000 on lion's grottos, and \$9,000 for fencing. Frank H. Buck, known at the time as a collector of wild animals, was chosen as director. Because of his fame as a collector of animals, Buck got the zoo orangutans, rhinoceros, kangaroos, leopards, sacred monkeys, flamingoes, cranes, turtles from Magdalena Bay, what was billed as "the only sea elephant in captivity," and "Diablo," a 23-foot python and the Zoo's number-one visitor attraction during those periods when he was force-fed with a sausage stuffer. A trainer of wild animals, Buck trained elephants and camels at the zoo so that children, sailors and celebrities could ride them. He was removed by the Zoological Society at the instigation of Dr. Wegeforth after three months because Wegeforth claimed he would not take orders. Leaving aside the question of who should run a zoo, its director or its president, Dr. Wegeforth could not have been pleased that during Frank Buck's period as director, he got most of the praise for the zoo's accomplishments.

Dr. Wegeforth wanted a second-in-command who would assume control of the zoo's day-by-day operations while he was busy with his medical practice and who would be more tractable than Frank Buck. This he found in Belle J. Benchley, who served as "executive secretary" (but in reality as the only female director of a zoo in the world) from 1927 to 1953.

Financier and businessman John D. Spreckels also made many unrecorded donations to the Zoo. The most notable of these was his purchase of two female Asian elephants, whom San Diego children named "Happy" and "Joy." These elephants were part of the enormous shipment that director Buck had brought to the Zoo in May 1923. As part of a jest with Spreckels over whether the elephants were "white elephants," Dr. Wegeforth had the elephants "painted" with talcum powder. He later charged Buck with endangering their lives because he had oil applied to their skins! Mr. and Mrs. O'Rourke established a Zoological Institute for the education of children and an administration and entrance center in the former Nevada and Standard Oil Exposition buildings which had been repaired at a cost of more than \$50,000. The two converted buildings joined the Reptile House (former Harvester Building) at the east or main entrance to the zoological grounds. The O'Rourkes quickly became disillusioned with Dr. Wegeforth after he broke his promise of cooperation with them, slighted their education efforts, and started proceedings to have their Institute evicted from a building they had purchased and remodeled, claiming (rightly, it turns out) that the building did not belong to them. Wegeforth threatened to resign as zoo directorship if the City Council did not evict the O'Rourkes. This led to an astonishing situation in which the City Attorney "forgot" the eviction order he was told to execute, the O'Rourkes stayed for two decades in a building they did not own, and Dr. Wegeforth retained his administrative position. (San Diego Union, October 15, 1929.) The Elmer C. Otto Educational Center, dedicated December 2, 1966, is today's successor to the O'Rourke Institute.

On November 6, 1934, voters approved a property tax of two cents for each \$100 dollars of assessed real and personal property within the city of San Diego for the exclusive maintenance of zoological exhibits, after two similar voter-approved propositions had been held up by technicalities, a tax that in 1998 netted the zoo \$3,748,735. Even so, the Zoo never acquired title to the land it occupied in Balboa Park nor to animals within the Zoo's territory. Land and animals have been and are the property of the City of San Diego and are under the jurisdiction of the City Manager. Unlike other cities where zoos are municipally owned and operated, the Zoo

was run by a private group of citizens, who had to abide by restrictions to keep its non-profit or tax-free status. When in August, 1932, San County assessor James Hervey Johnson attempted to auction the zoo animals to make up \$100,000 in back taxes, he was apparently unaware that the Zoo did not own the animals (Los Angeles Times, August 31, 1932).

Like the U. S. Navy, the Zoo has always had a large number of supporters who backed the Zoo through thick and thin. These supporters came from the echelons of San Diego business and military men with professionals in medicine and education giving the undertaking erudite respectability. But even in its earliest days, a socially conscious faction opposed the Zoo's domineering power and acquisitiveness. George W. Marston, devotee of parks and spokesperson for San Diego as a City Beautiful, was in the forefront of attempts to balance the Zoo's interests with the larger interests of Balboa Park and of citizens of the city. Mayor John L. Bacon, an engineer who helped lay out the aquatic features of the zoo, Park Board members Hugo Klauber, John Forward, Jr. and architect William Templeton Johnson, the Federated Trades Council and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce opposed Dr. Wegeforth's proposal to give the Zoological Society exclusive control of the San Diego Zoo. The San Diego Union editorial staff was, however, in favor. The proposition went down to defeat, April 7, 1925, with an official vote of 7,930 yes and 13,242 no.

As a non-profit corporation made up of a volunteer Board of Trustees, a salaried administrative staff, and hourly-paid employees, the San Diego Zoological Society is beset with many of the problems that afflict large corporations, public or private, such as sloppy bookkeeping, extravagant expenditures, padded expense accounts and figurehead positions. A number of these problems surfaced in January, 1983, when 130 of the Zoo's 1,200 employees revolted against the way the Zoo was being conducted. Some of these employees resigned in protest; others were expunged from the payroll. These employees charged that the Zoo management was top-heavy with supervisors, was using emergency reserves to pay for a "Heart of the Zoo" exhibit, was responsible for a decline of 100 in animal species over a period of ten years, was putting circus acts—some with clowns—ahead of caring for and showing animals in appropriate settings, and was diverting leased zoo cars to private business. (Los Angeles Times, January 9, 1983)

Some of these mistakes have been corrected, others are still present. The urge to make money overrides aesthetics, education and animal welfare. Animals are made to behave like human beings in shows held daily to the applause of gullible audiences, who think such exhibitions are "cute." Restaurants, food stands and souvenir shops are placed at almost every intersection. Rides on an overhead tram and on buses with amplified speeches from guides are available on payment of additional fees. The guides, of course, do not point out those animals who exhibit neurotic and unruly behavior in enclosures that—no matter how large and sanitary—cannot duplicate the natural environments, social groupings, and outlets for skills in the lands where their species evolved, nor do they tell of older and surplus animals the Zoo gets rid of to make room for younger or more choice specimens. Many of the Zoological Society's money-making activities may be justified; nonetheless, the preoccupation with peripheral activities—circuses, rides for thrills and commercial ventures—may corrupt the purpose for which good zoos are established—to stimulate curiosity and to develop respect for non-human forms of life with whom human beings are inextricably related.

If the Zoo had maintained a modest collection of animals, on the order of the Zoo in Central Park, New York City, and not on the order of the zoo in the Bronx there would not have been a problem, in the past, the present or the future. But the Zoo, chaffing at its limitations, asked for and generally got more land, money and dispensations. The San Diego Zoological Society, incidentally, used the plan and special semi-independent status of the Bronx Zoo as its model when it was first getting started, In this connection it is interesting that the Bronx Zoo today charges adults \$7.75 and children, between the ages of 2 and 12, and seniors 65 and over \$4.00 for gate admission with Wednesdays as a free day while the San Diego Zoo charges adults \$16.00 and children, between the ages of 3 and 11, \$7.00 with free admission on the first Monday in October in honor of Dr. Wegeforth.

In an interview, Dr. Charles Schroeder, director of the San Diego Zoo from 1953 to 1972, pointed out the superior character of the San Diego Wild Animal Park at San Pasqual and the limitations of the San Diego Zoo in words that are forever true..

Our gorilla exhibit at the Wild Animal Park is one of the largest anywhere. But it's not enough. Animals need space to love and to run, to explore new areas, to climb and do all the things that come naturally. There isn't enough room for that. When you speak of the zoo in Balboa Park, there is nowhere for them to go. There are ninety-two acres locked in. It's bigger than zoos used to be. Let's face it, there were times when you had a tiger in an area sixteen feet by eight feet deep. Anybody knows that's not adequate for a tiger, and there's lots of zoos that have beautiful tiger exhibits, and they're pretty big, but they are inadequate.

No, the Park is not even enough, but we've tried. The idea of putting animals in their natural settings is not new, but the presentation is. The free-ranging animals move in herds, not in pairs, as in most zoos.

("Mister Zoo—The Life and Legacy of Dr. Charles Schroeder," by Douglas G. Myers with Lynda Rutledge Stephenson, Published by The Zoological Society of San Diego, 1999, pp. 175-176.)

San Diegans often pay lip service to Balboa Park, but they have not in recent years shown a deep-seated commitment to maintaining the park as an open, green, friendly space where people from all walks of life can gather for peaceful play and rest.

The San Diego Union and its former auxiliary the San Diego Tribune have run editorials deploring institutional expansion in Balboa Park (San Diego Union, November 21, 1926, April 2, 1974 and February 6, 1975), however, when presented with an immediate and pressing need, writers of editorials have forgotten previous editorial positions.

Unless an overwhelming number of the people of San Diego rise up and protest the Zoo's plans for more land in opposition to all past Balboa Park master plans and to the advice of landscape architects and environmentalists (San Diego Union, July 12, 1999), the Zoo, like an insatiable maw, will appease its hunger for a time and in 40 more years it will be back for more of the same. If the City Council should turn the Zoo's requests down (an eventuality by no means

certain), the Zoo will have to readjust its operations, so that its wildlife conservation and breeding programs and its growing of browse for animals are located outside Balboa Park.