

Iki, the elephant, will live on at WSU

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

THE REMAINS of an elephant, named Iki, have drawn a number of area residents to a course on museum techniques and reconstruction at Wayne State University.

Dusty cleaning and reassembling Iki's skeleton, they are unanimous in their sentiments about the pachyderm-sized project.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Anita Schwartz of Farmington Hills and Sherri Stewart of Bloomfield Hills, as they scrapped, sanded and scrubbed backbone vertebrae.

They and some 30 or so others have been laboring one night a week since January, cleaning Iki's bones and preparing to assemble the huge skeleton for permanent display in the foyer of a stately old building on campus called Old Main.

The project is the brain child of Dr. Jeheskal "Hezy" Shoshani, a mammologist at Wayne State who is teaching the class.

FOIR SCHWARTZ, a former geology major in college, and Stewart, a docent at the Cranbrook Institute of Science, the opportunity to participate in the project was "too good to overlook."

They enrolled as visitors to audit the course when it was first offered this past winter. They also plan to enroll in the spring course scheduled for May and June.

Shoshani is hopeful the cleaning of Iki's bones will be completed by then but unless 25 or more students enroll in the course, it will be cancelled.

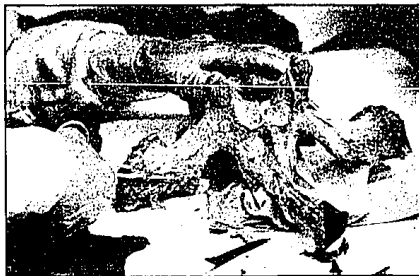
If all goes as planned, however, Shoshani expects to assemble the skeleton next fall. The entire project will have required an estimated 4-5,000 man hours, he said.

IKI, ORIGINALLY from Sri Lanka, performed with Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus for 40 years before dying in Florida in 1980.

Shoshani and other volunteers brought Iki's body to Detroit in a rented truck just days after the elephant died.

Sue Bordenchuk, a bartender from Troy, was one of those volunteers. Now she and a friend, Craig Justice, who is a chef in Troy, are taking Shoshani's course because "we like elephants."

Once at Wayne State, the right side of the skeleton was embalmed for anatomical study at the school and elsewhere. The trunk, for exam-



A gloved student cleans Iki's vertebrae.

ple, has been at Duke University in North Carolina until recently.

The left side of the skeleton was placed in the tightly-sealed "boiler room" at the university where dermestid beetles attacked flesh, eating the bones nearly clean.

Now students are removing remaining bits of tissue, a job they said is tedious and difficult, particularly from embalmed bones where tissue has frozen rock-hard.

Since the beginning of the course, Elise Slovis, of Bloomfield Township, and Carol DeFord, of Southfield, have been attacking one of Iki's enormous femurs. The bone had been embalmed, requiring the women to use electric drills, knives and steel wool in their efforts.

"We soaked it to soften the tissue, then the tissue rotted and started to stink. So we soaked it in Bz Detergent. It didn't make it any easier to clean but at least it smells better," they said.

Slovis and DeFord are museum educators at Cranbrook Institute.

SHOSHANI, 43, originally of Israel and now of Bloomfield Hills, is an ardent elephant lover who enjoys passing this feeling along to others.

"They are intelligent mammals," he said, whose bodies combine both the most primitive as well as the most specialized features of mammals.

"The arrangement of their blood vessels and their large rib cage (20 ribs) are primitive. Yet their trunk is one of the most specialized features in any mammal," Shoshani said.

"Elephants have fascinated man since the dawn of ages," Shoshani shares Shoshani's fascination. "I've always

been interested," she said. Brosnahan enrolled in the class after being told about it by a Farmington Hills neighbor.

The neighbor, Rita Kaplan, is familiar with Shoshani's work because she has participated in summer excavations near Pine Knob that Shoshani has led since 1983.

Summer excavation teams have been uncovering remains of a mastodon after part of a skull was inadvertently uncovered in 1980 during construction for a home.

"The class (on Iki's skeleton) extends (the experience of) the dig for me through the winter," Kaplan said.

EXCAVATIONS FOR the mastodon are jointly conducted by Wayne State University, the Highland Lakes campus of Oakland Community College and Cranbrook Institute, and college course credit may be earned by enrolling at Wayne State or Oakland Community.

For information about the cleaning and reconstruction of Iki or to register in the spring course at Wayne State, call 577-2873 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Final registration date is May 8.

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion or are planning a new venture or project — and there's a Farmington-area business angle — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Farmington Observer readers. Send items to: Short takes, Farmington Observer, 43203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.



photos by STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Dr. Jeheskal "Hezy" Shoshani explains the finer points of an elephant's anatomy to Sherri Stewart (left) of Bloomfield Hills, and Anita Schwartz of Farmington Hills.

short takes

• NAMED COORDINATOR

David Ritzman of Farmington Hills was named client services coordinator for Alamo Learning Systems, a national training and development firm. Alamo's central region headquarters is in Farmington Hills.

In the newly created position, Ritzman will assist clients in identifying training needs, tailoring courseware and developing strategies to achieve on-the-job application.

He comes to Alamo from Minneapolis, where he was training administrator for Group Health, Inc., one of the largest group health plans in the Midwest. He was formerly account manager for Wilson Learning Corp., Chicago.

• NOW A VP

Suzanne Shawn of Farmington Hills was promoted to group supervisor for network/new technologies at Campbell-Ewald, a Warren-based advertising agency.

She will keep Campbell-Ewald up to date on new media developments in cable television and high-tech innovations.

• GROWING FAST

George Notarianni, president of Farmington Hills-based Gas Monitoring & Analysis, has announced GMA's selection as one of the fastest-growing private companies in the country.

It's listed in "INC. 500," published annually by INC. Magazine.

GMA reached the top 500 list for the first time in its six-year history, placing 228th. It achieved a five-year sales growth of 952 percent.

GMA is a hospital consulting company dealing in the measurement and control of potentially hazardous gases commonly used in the hospital environment. It was founded to provide hospitals with important information about employee exposure to such potentially hazardous gases as formaldehyde, nitrous oxide and ethylene oxide.

GMA has grown to provide in-depth consulting, technical service and related products to hundreds of hospitals.

Annual sales for GMA reached \$1 million, including contracts with some of the largest medical facilities in the country.

GMA regularly provides technical lecturers for seminars on hazardous gas exposure control. It has assisted federal and state occupational health authorities in developing exposure standards and testing protocols.

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• NEW OFFICE

Catholic Social Services of Oakland County has opened a new office, Margaret Huggard, Catholic Social Services executive director.

The new location, at 26105 Orchard Lake at 11 Mile in Farmington Hills, was chosen to better serve residents of southern and western Oakland County.

Services available at the new location include individual and family counseling, marital counseling, older adult services, adoption and foster care services and substance abuse assessment and therapy, including special programs for adolescents and older adults.

For more information, call 471-4140.

• SHE'S OUTSTANDING

Cynthia Elzinga of Farmington Hills was named one of the Outstanding Young Women of America.

The Outstanding Young Women of America programs seeks to recognize the achievements and abilities of women between the ages of 21 and 35.

These women are being honored for their outstanding civic and professional contributions to their community, their state and the nation.

• CREATES MAGIC

Magic Lantern Productions, a Farmington Hills-based production company, is well known for its creative work with television commercials.

It uses miniatures and other spe-

cial effects to give commercials extra punch to catch the viewer's eye and imagination.

Some of its memorable work done for W.B. Doner Advertising includes the large bank vault expanding at the seams as the Michigan Lottery grows and grows without a winner while nervous bank guards try to compose each other before the vault explodes.

Another commercial uses the Indiana Jones theme for a Highland Appliances repair truck that makes it through gunfire, hijackers, a large gorilla and roadblocks to reach a customer's home with . . . "no problem."

Now, Magic Lantern has been tapped by two of Hollywood's top filmmakers: Stephen Spielberg and Dino DeLaurentis.

For Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, Magic Lantern has worked on "Harry and the Hendersons," a comedy adventure film directed by William Dear. Magic Lantern produced a film composite for "Harry and the Hendersons."

In the recently released DeLaurentis horror film, "Evil Dead II," directed by Sam Raimi, Magic Lantern provided special effects that include trees coming to life and attacking a lonely cabin in the woods. The living trees and cabin effects were done with miniatures.

Asked if this means Magic Lantern will spend less time on television commercial productions and industrial films and more time working on features, president Robert Dyke responded:

"Actually, we are expanding our resources and Magic Lantern will be more of everything. We fully intend on continuing our TV work as well as getting more and more into feature film work. And because films are being shot on locations all over the world, and because we are only four hours from Los Angeles, it doesn't matter where you are located as long as you make yourself available when Hollywood calls, and get the job done on time and on budget."

• ASSISTANT VP

Virginia Frost of Farmington Hills was appointed assistant vice president in the auditing department at Detroit-based Comerica Inc.

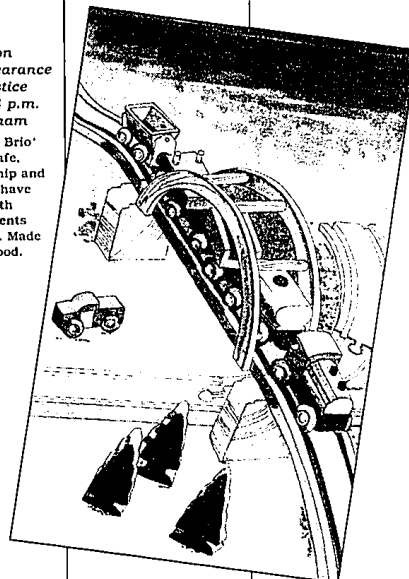
Frost joined the corporation in 1979 as a management trainee. She has held positions of increasing responsibility since then.

She is a member of the Banking Administration Institute.

the Young individualists

Demonstration and personal appearance by Mr. Roy Justice
May 9, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Toys, Birmingham

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