

These Are A Few Of My Favorite Things...

animals. Animals are my favorite things. If I'm bored – yeah, right, with 4 kids, when does that happen? Ok, if I were ever bored, my activity of choice would be to visit a zoo, wildlife park, pet store, or anyplace I could see animals. Without leaving the house, I can also research animals on the internet. One of my favorite animal sites is the [University of Michigan's Animal Diversity Web](#). It's amazing how much they've changed the taxonomy (classification of animals) from when I first started doing research on the subject not more than 10 years ago, but it's true – this field is one that's ever-changing.

Every now and then, I think I'll choose an animal to share on my blog. Today's animal is the pangolin. What is a pangolin, you ask? Well, it's a mammal, and it's not a marsupial, a group which contains some of the lesser known species. See, in the classification of mammals, you begin by separating them into placental mammals (live birth) and marsupials (young live in the mother's pouch – all but one type live in Australia). Of course, there is also a third category – egg-laying mammals, but we won't go there because I don't want to lose people's interest by getting too complicated.

So anyway, the pangolin is a placental mammal, yet it's scaly. The scales are actually made of a hair-like material, thereby preserving its status as mammal. Check this out – does this thing look prehistoric or what?



But they're not prehistoric; they still exist today – I wonder how come I've never seen one at a zoo? I guess it's because some animals do better in captivity than others, and I applaud the zoo community for recognizing this.

Interesting tidbits about pangolins, as stated on the Animal Diversity Web:

Pangolins are a small group (seven living species placed in one genus and one family, Manidae) of mammals that feed mostly on ants. They are found in the tropical regions of Africa and Asia. Pangolins are conspicuous and remarkable because their backs are covered with large, overlapping scales made up of agglutinated hairs. But they are strange in other ways as well. Their tongue is extraordinarily long and muscular, arising from the pelvis and the last pair of ribs deep in the animal's chest. As a result, the tongue and associated muscles are longer than the animal's head and body, allowing the tongue to be extruded to an astonishing degree. Pangolins lack teeth. Instead, the the pyloric part of their stomach is thickened and muscular, with odd keratinous spines projecting into its interior. It usually contains pebbles and seems to be used for "chewing" in much the same way as a bird's gizzard. Pangolins have the ability to close their ears and nostrils as well as eyes, presumably to keep ants out.

In short, pangolins are fascinating animals that are closer to you and me on the taxonomy tree than most people would guess – they are mammals, after all. Yet they are a mammal that most

people have not heard of, and surprisingly, there are more than a few mammalian species that have this in common – I will try to share little known facts about little known mammals in my blog.

And oh yeah, since there was a complaint in the comments of another tangents.org blog about this – the song I quoted in my title is “My Favorite Things” from The Sound of Music.

Defunct TV Part II

Since my first post about defunct tv was SO lengthy, I had to omit some of my favorite tv shows from yester-year which were so great they warrant a mention and another post.

[The Bozo Show](#) – If you grew up in Chicagoland, this show was an icon. Some people in Ohio have told me it was on tv here too, but I know it just wasn't the same as growing up with Bozo next door. First of all, EVERYONE you knew went to see the Bozo show live. The girl I went with was put on the waiting list when she was in utero, and we were 9 or 10 years old before her mother finally got the tickets that allowed us entry into the show. But I'm just glad I got the experience, and I'm even more glad that I was old enough to remember seeing Bozo live – it was really neat. I was really scared of a character named Wizzo though, and I hoped he wouldn't be there on the day I was... Ironically, I don't remember if he was in that episode or not. My husband went to a Bozo show taping of course, since he was also a Chicagoland kid, but neither of us were on the Grand Prize Game. There were other characters on the show, mainly Bozo's clown sidekick, Cookie, and also a puppet dog named Cuddly Duddly. I think I'm going to have to dig out the tape of the show I was on, just for

memories... So was Bozo aired nationally? Since it was so hugely popular in our area, it's hard to say; it's not like there was an internet back then or like I traveled a lot or had pen pals as a kid to ask. I would guess so, since lots of people have heard of it, but I'm sure it was nothing like the phenomena it reached in Chicagoland.

[Land of the Lost](#) – Saturday morning tv at its finest. This was a live show about a family who was transported back in time to contend with all kinds of prehistoric creatures like dinosaurs, etc. While looking up the show on imdb, I learned that there were 2 versions. One that aired from 1974-76, and one from 1991-92. I will dismiss the 90's remake since I wasn't a big fan. But as for the original, I barely remember it but I know that I LOVED it! I must have watched it in syndication however, because I was not around to see it from '74-'76. But, when I saw the photos and synopsis of the episodes, I know that's the show I watched and loved. Interesting note – they are currently make a [movie version](#) due out next year starring [Will Ferrell](#) as the dad! I am a big fan of Will Ferrell's. I think he is great in almost everything I've seen him in; he's always funny and surprisingly versatile. He stars in one of my favorite Christmas movies of all time, [Elf](#). So I am anxious to see what they do with this remake of a classic tv show for our generation. I think the movie is slated to be a comedy, but with Will Ferrell as its star, that's no surprise. I wonder if they'll do what they did with the [Brady Bunch](#) movies and make it a satire of the tv show? It was very effective and funny when they did it in the Brady Bunch movies, but it would seem difficult to pull off for many tv shows without being too over the top. With the cheesy sets and special effects and costumes of the '70's Land of the Lost, satire might be a good avenue to explore for the movie remake. It'd be cool to see the movie set in the 70's – well, the family gets sent back in time, but if the family were still from the '70's... Guess we'll just have to wait until 2009 to see!

[The Littles](#) – A catchy theme song which began, “We are the Littles...” It was an awesome Saturday morning cartoon (which of course spawned into toys, lunchboxes, books, and even a few movies) about a family of small people with pointy ears and tails who lived within the walls of a Bigg (literally, this was the surname of the family!) family’s house. The plots revolved around Tom and Lucy Little, a brother and sister who tried to keep their dopey aviator cousin Dinky out of trouble along with their Grandpa Little. The Littles had rigged up their own little world within the walls of the Bigg’s home which they entered through a light socket, and it was neat to see how they used normal size objects to make things they needed. They would often enlist the help of Henry Bigg, the human regular-size kid who lived in the house, since he was the only human to know about the Littles. Cute show – I could probably find it on [youtube](#) or somewhere like that if I looked.

[Shirt Tales](#) – Adorable little animal characters who began as a line of greeting cards were turned into a cartoon. Their shirts would display different sayings to express their feelings; such as Hug Me, Cuddly, or Dig Me (worn by a mole). A really cute cartoon which aired on the USA network as part of its Cartoon Express, of which Pac Man the cartoon was also a part; see below.

[Pac Man](#) – A cartoon based upon the popular video game. I don’t remember much about it, but I know I liked it, and it didn’t last long. I think if I were to see this cartoon today as an adult, it would be dumb, whereas Shirt Tales might be cute. I haven’t checked youtube, but they both just might be there; it seems likely.