



DISPATCHES . . .

Carousels for Conservation

Zoos around the country are raising awareness of endangered species by putting a novel spin on the classic carousel. Instead of horses, these new merry-go-rounds feature threatened animals, including pandas, sloth bears, and manatees. "Anything that brings you closer to an animal makes you stop and think about it," says Art Ritchie, a master carver with Ohio-based Carousel Works Inc., which, in 1994, created the world's first endangered-species carousel for a rainforest exhibit at an Indiana zoo. The company has since created themed carousel figures from African mammals to beneficial insects (at the Bronx Zoo, you can ride a bombardier beetle). A Tennessee carver, Bud Ellis, hopes to revive the nearly extinct art of carousel carving while helping the environment. At his carving school, students are creating a 24-figure endangered-species carousel for the zoo in Chattanooga, Tennessee. One of those students, Julie Caton, recently completed a silverback gorilla named Nathan. "I like the expression in his eyes," she says. "Not too cute, not too mean." —*Hilda Brucker*

