



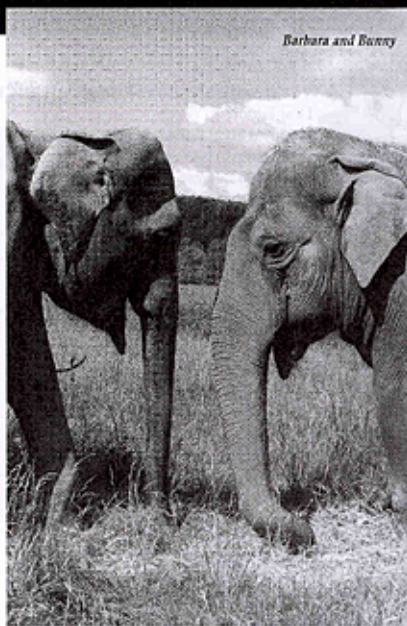
A big homeopathic practice

by J.P. Borneman

FILE THIS UNDER "just when you think that you've heard everything." I recently had dinner with some friends who were very enthusiastic about a website that they had seen—www.elephants.com. Our friends are very socially active and had recently become concerned about the treatment of Asian elephants throughout the world, and particularly in the United States. It seems that many elephants are brought to the U.S. to perform in circuses and shows, and once past breeding age are abandoned. Worse, many elephants are abused throughout their "careers" resulting in years of suffering. This can be for a very long time as elephants often have a life span of 80 or more years. Our friends were very impressed with the efforts of a group in Tennessee to rehabilitate Asian elephants who had been abused. Fair enough, let's move on to dessert. Then the comment came, "They use homeopathy you know." Hold the coffee. Homeopathy? On elephants?

A little internet surfing and I was led to Lori Tapp, a veterinarian and graduate of the University of Florida, who early in her career had an interest in acupuncture. In the early 1990s she met Don Hamilton, DVM, in Asheville, North Carolina, and read George Vitboulkas' text, *The Science of Homeopathy*. It was not long until she was off to study with homeopathic veterinarian Richard Pitcairn, DVM, in 1993 and 1994 and then to work with Dr. Pitcairn in his practice until 1996.

Around that time, Lori was told by some friends about Carol Buckley, a former elephant trainer who had made the decision to help preserve the lives of female Asian elephants in the U.S. Carol Buckley had trained and then owned an elephant named Tarra. She was so deeply affected by her relationship with Tarra and the plight of other Asian elephants that she was moved to act. Buckley was able to obtain 800 acres of land surrounded by a 3000-acre "buffer zone" outside Hohenwald, Tennessee, opening the Elephant Sanctuary in 1995. The facility currently has six residents. It is not open to the public, although you can "visit" it on the internet. The reason that the public is not invited, according to Carol Buckley, is that the objective of the facility is to create as natural an environment as possible. Buckley's facility is a true sanctuary where the elephant residents can form their own social bonds and communities without human interference. It is a place where they can be psychologically and emotionally at rest. Carol notes that it takes about \$185,000 properly invested to keep an elephant at her facility—this



Barbara and Benny

includes a cost of about \$60/day for food alone. Elephants have varied diets: 75% of their diet consists of grazed grasses, leaves, wild berries, vines, bamboo (cane), root plants, and wild vegetation. The remaining 25% of their diet consists of timothy hay, specially formulated elephant grain, rolled oats, ground corn, and assorted produce. A full-grown Asian elephant eats approximately 150–200 pounds of food and drinks 30–50 gallons of water every day. Both Asian and African elephants will walk 50 miles daily in search of food, water, and preferred climate.

So, Lori Tapp made contact with Carol Buckley. Buckley asked Tapp to help her treat some acute cases with her "girls." So, how do you take an elephant's case?

Dr. Tapp reports that elephants are both very intelligent and creative. It is not a myth that elephants have the ability to remember, and to form deep social and emotional bonds with both people and other elephants over long periods of time. Elephants' cases are taken the same as any other organisms that communicate without expressive spoken language. Dr. Tapp notes that the elephants all have specific personalities, routines, and habits that they exhibit when they are well and happy. She observes deviations from these norms as symptoms. Tapp and Buckley can list common symptoms, chief complaints, as well as peculiarities and modalities each time an elephant is unwell. Typical cases among the herd include colics that have been treated with polychrests including *Colchicum* and *Chamomilla*, as well as emotional traumas that have responded to *Pulsatilla*, *Ignatia*, *Aconite*, and *Stramonium*. Dr. Tapp also points out that the elephants are prone to abscesses that have been successfully treated with *Silicea*.



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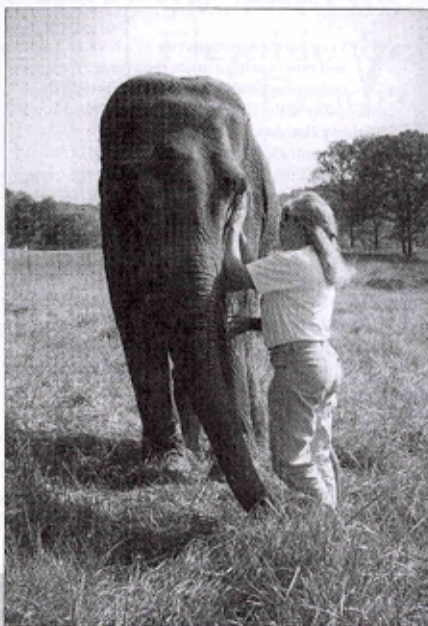
Elephants, like humans, may change their behavior as they heal. Tapp and Buckley both reported on the history of Tarra, a female Asian elephant who they described as lonely and bored. Buckley was looking for an emotional outlet for Tarra and—this is true—decided to provide the elephant with paintbrushes, paint, and large paper. Tarra could do representational painting—in fact she was becoming known for paintings of irises. Later, another female, Jenny, was introduced into the herd. Tarra and Jenny formed a bond with one another and, curiously, Tarra never picked up a brush again. Her emotional need was apparently filled through contact with another elephant. Similar types of behavior changes were observed after administration of properly prescribed homeopathic medicines.

I asked Dr. Tapp how the medicines were administered to the elephants. She noted, "Elephants are easy! Cats are hardest. A cat will spit out anything except the smallest homeopathic pellets. Elephants will easily take a homeopathic remedy mixed with their food." And so, the herd is dosed as necessary with medicines put right in their food.

Dr. Tapp is back in North Carolina now and works with her Tennessee elephants mostly by phone—Carol Buckley observes and reports symptoms. I asked Dr. Tapp how she gets along with the local Veterinary Board in North Carolina. She observed, "The Vet Board is great, they even let me use homeopathic conferences for continuing education credits." I wonder if they know about the

elephants? My parting question for Lori was—what was the strangest organism she's ever treated. "A spider! Have you ever tried to take a spider's case?"

See you in the pharmacy! 🐾



Homeopathic veterinarian Lori Tapp, DVM, examines Jenny, an Asian elephant at the Elephant Sanctuary. After years of mistreatment, thirty-two-year-old Jenny has been nursed back to health with homeopathy and other therapies.

Jenny's story

Jenny, born in 1969, spent her entire captive life performing in circuses. In January 1992, after repeatedly running away from her trainers during circus performances, she was sent to a breeding facility in Illinois. Four months later, Jenny sustained a serious leg injury caused by a bull elephant. Jenny did not receive treatment for her injury, but instead was put on butazone, a pain killer.

One year later, declared "useless" as a breeder, she was sold to a small traveling circus. Competing for food with the other elephants and trying to balance herself in the moving trailer soon took its toll. She deteriorated to the point where loading in and out of the trailer was nearly impossible. As a result, she was left inside the elephant trailer most of the time.

In April 1995, Jenny's owner decided she was "worthless" and dumped her at a dilapidated animal shelter outside of Las Vegas. When Jenny arrived, she was severely underweight, not using her injured leg, and had developed chronic foot rot,

which is life-threatening if untreated. She was exposed to below-freezing weather and put in chains at night due to inadequate facilities.

On September 11, 1996, Jenny arrived at the Elephant Sanctuary and took her first step to freedom. Afraid and shy at first, she visibly relaxed when Tarra (the Sanctuary's first resident) gently stroked Jenny's head with her trunk and finally coaxed her to entwine trunks! Everyone watched through tears of relief and joy at this obvious display of comfort and love. Thanks to homeopath Dr. Lori Tapp and the staff at The Elephant Sanctuary, her health is now much improved and her leg has healed.

That's the good news—the reality is that The Elephant Sanctuary has only raised one half of the funds necessary to support Jenny's basic long-term care, feeding, and medical treatment. To learn more about helping Jenny and other Asian elephants, see www.elephants.com or call (931) 796-6500. [Thanks to the Elephant Sanctuary for Jenny's story and photos.]