

# Safari

BY MICHAEL LYON

Sunday was soggy. The Monday morning sky gave no sign of the sunshine that the weather experts had predicted the night before, but we decided to take our chances. Twenty-two students and five staff set out on Safari. During the ninety minute trip to the Virginia Safari Park, most of the students in my vehicle entertained themselves calmly, but there was one student that had me worried. "I'm so excited! This is going to be so much fun!" he said several times. I thought to myself, "I've never been there before... What if it's not that great... What if it rains?" With that level of excitement, it could be a big let down.



By the time we got to our destination, the sky had cleared, the sun had emerged, and the soggy mid-morning had become a beautiful day. Safari Park staff welcomed us onto a wagon just the right size to accommodate all twenty-seven of us. As we boarded, each of us was given a

bucket of feed, then the group was given instructions and warnings about how to feed the various animals. We started down a road where llamas and emus were waiting to greet us. Stopping every so often, we were given a chance to offer the more than willing



animals food from our buckets. Emus pecked buckets excitedly, llamas tried to steal buckets, and bison would stick out their amazingly long tongues to show us they were ready for us to pour food into their mouths.

There was an assortment of antelope, deer, moose, and other interesting animals along the way.



After our ride, we were given an opportunity to meet and pet a huge ball python. We took a lunch break and went on to visit more animals on foot.



As the monkeys showed off their gymnastics, a student called out "Parkour!" We saw black squirrels with brightly colored stripes, giraffes, peacocks, kangaroos, penguins, tigers, and more. When we visited the parakeets, one of them was happy to sit on students' hands while eating seed.



As it turned out, there was no cause for concern. The weather was perfect. The place was great. A good time was had by all.