

# HighLife

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## Jack is back

Jungle Jack Hanna brings his show to the Eagle Valley Land Trust's EverGreen Ball tonight at the Vilar Performing Arts Center

By Randy Wyrick  
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Jungle Jack Hanna loves his zoo so much that he and his wife sold their house after 30 years and moved in with the animals.

Once in a while, though, you have to get out of the house.

Hanna is bringing his "Into the Wild ... Live" stage show to the Vilar Performing Arts Center for the Eagle Valley Land Trust's EverGreen Ball. The fast-paced show cuts between animal appearances and video clips, all while Hanna tells his interesting stories.

Hanna is America's zookeeper and built the Columbus Zoo into the country's top zoo. He's the star of syndicated television shows and author of a dozen books.

And he's hilarious.

For the Vilar show, he'll bring mostly endangered species, including a full grown cheetah and a clouded leopard — one of the rarest animals on earth. There are only about 1,000 clouded leopards in the wild. There's a sloth and all sorts of other creatures including — get this — a honey

badger. There are only six of these tough creatures, made famous on YouTube, in captivity in this country, and he's bringing one of them.

"It's for anyone 3 years old to 100. We've been very successful entertaining and educating audiences with a wide age range," Hanna said.

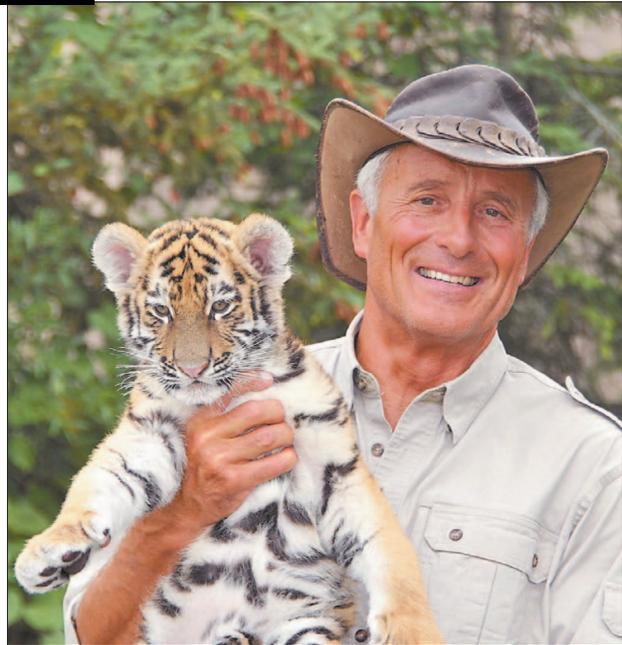
### BRINGING ANIMALS TO THE PEOPLE

Hanna has been doing it professionally since 1969. He was raised on a farm in his native Tennessee and wanted to be a zookeeper.

He landed at the zoo in Columbus, Ohio, decades ago. This year, USA Today named it the No.1 zoo in the country. More than 2.4 million people visit every year, Hanna said.

The United States is home to 220 accredited zoos and aquariums, and 176 million people visited them each year, Hanna said. Zoos are in the business of educating people, and they invest in their business. The Columbus Zoo, for example, just spent \$24 million on a habitat for three polar bears.

"It's the No. 1 recreation activity in



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

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### IF YOU GO ...

**What:** The EverGreen Ball with Jack Hanna's "Into the Wild ... Live."

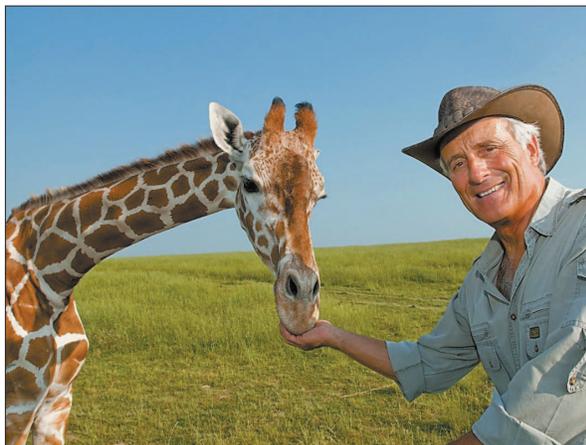
**What:** International television star Jack Hanna brings his show to town as a benefit for the Eagle Valley Land Trust.

**Where:** Vilar Performing Arts Center, Beaver Creek.

**When:** Today, 6:30 p.m. for cocktails and meeting Jack Hanna, 8 p.m. for the show.

**Cost:** \$125/\$75 for adults, depending on seat location. \$35 for children 12 and younger. VIP tickets are \$200 for seating in the first three rows and include the opportunity to go backstage to meet Hanna and his wild animals in person.

**More information:** Go to [www.theevergreenball.org](http://www.theevergreenball.org), [www.evlv.org](http://www.evlv.org) or call the Vilar Center Box Office at 970-845-TIXS.



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America. Not the NFL, and not NASCAR," Hanna said.

This is Hanna's 30th year on ABC's Good Morning America and his 28th year on David Letterman. He produces three different television series and is on the road 200 days a year in special vans. The animals travel better than most people.

"We bring the animals to the people. You can tell them about a cheetah, but it's quite something else to show them," Hanna said.

"I'm 66 years old, and I love what I do," Hanna said.

They're off to Mozambique, then the coral reefs to do a show on sharks ... the road never ends.

"We always respect the animals we work with," Hanna said. "In the wild, both you and the animals have a comfort zone, and we try not to get inside it. That's why we don't have too many incidents. If I get hurt, I'm in the wrong place."

The Eagle Valley Land Trust holds 24 parcels and 6,500 acres of protected lands under conservation easements in Eagle County.

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