

## GETTING TO KNOW PACKY

**P**acky is the tallest Asian elephant in the United States at 10 feet, 6 inches, and his 12,500-pound weight isn't anything to sneeze at either. While Packy has quite the sweet tooth — he's particularly fond of juicy fruits — keepers help him maintain a healthy weight through exercise, diet and regular weigh-ins. Packy has sired seven calves, including Oregon Zoo elephants Sung-Surin (Shine) and Rama.

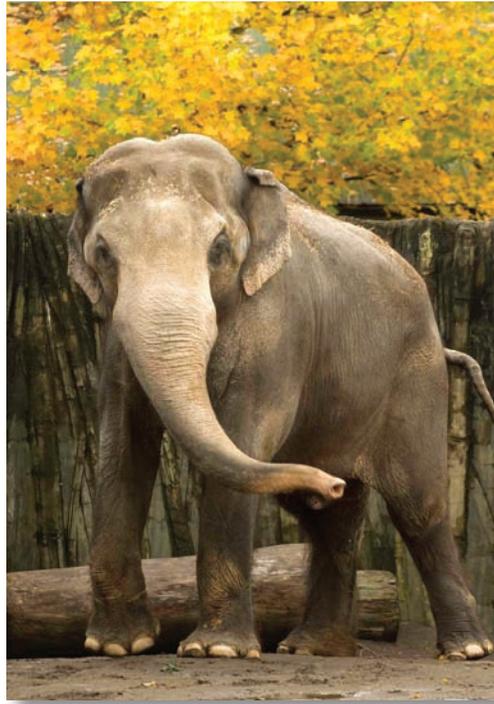
### His lineage

Packy's father, Thonglaw, might be considered "the elephant father of North America." In addition to Packy, Thonglaw fathered 14 other calves, a record at the time.

Packy's 50th birthday story began in 1960, when Thonglaw and female elephant Belle were living in Woodland, Wash., with noted animal trader Morgan Berry. The elephants bred that July and were then brought to the Oregon Zoo by Berry, along with another female, Pet.

From then on, zoo veterinarian Dr. Matthew Maberry kept a meticulous chart of Belle's pregnancy. Always a quiet, calm animal, Belle behaved normally during her pregnancy, but by her 18th month, she began to show signs of discomfort.

For Maberry and senior elephant keeper Al Tucker, it was the beginning of a hectic time. Like zoo staff everywhere, they knew little about elephant births, and there were few books of any use on the subject. A pragmatist with broad wildlife obstetrical experience, Maberry had delivered lions, tigers and buffaloes at the zoo — but no elephants. Maberry always said in those days, "I learned from Belle and she learned from me."



By the 19th month of Belle's pregnancy, Maberry could feel and hear a fetal heartbeat, and thought it was "just a matter of time." No one then knew the duration of an elephant's gestation period, as it was Oregon Zoo elephant births — starting with Packy — that established gestation lasts 20 to 22 months.

### His birth

When the zoo announced in 1961 that Belle was pregnant, the city went wild. No Asian elephants had been born in the Western Hemisphere in almost 44 years. Since the first elephant arrived in the U.S. aboard a ship in 1796, in fact, only nine elephants had been born on the continent, and most had died suddenly in infancy.

Portland radio stations launched hourly "Belle Bulletins," and the zoo was deluged with elephantine baby-shower gifts. Local department stores stocked up on, and immediately sold out of, stuffed toy elephants. News reporters from around the country camped out in the elephant barn to wait for the birth.

Belle finally dropped her baby at 5:58 a.m. on Saturday, April 14, 1962. Within 40 minutes the baby was nursing. (Packy was the first North American elephant to be raised exclusively on mother's milk.) At birth, Packy weighed 225 pounds and stood 35 inches tall.

During Packy's first days on view, the baby elephant attracted the largest crowds then seen at the zoo. Attendance that year topped one million for the first time, a record not broken until the zoo's Africa exhibit opened in 1989.

### His name

Belle's fuzzy little elephant baby became known as Packy on April 24, 1962. The name was chosen from among more than 3,000 entries in a contest held by radio station KPOJ. Wayne W. French of Gresham suggested the winning name, earning himself a portable stereo set.