

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Zoo's Rose-Tu Expecting Again

The Oregon Zoo's Asian elephant Rose-Tu is pregnant for second time. The 17-year-old pachyderm, who gave birth to Samudra in 2008, is expected to deliver another member of the zoo's celebrated elephant family in late 2012.

Keepers believe conception occurred the last week of February, when they observed significant breeding activity between Rose-Tu and Tusko. Tusko, a 13,000-pound, 40-year-old bull elephant, is also the father of Samudra. The gestation period for Asian elephants is 20 to 22 months.

"The birth of a new calf is an incredibly enriching event in these animals' lives," said Mike Keele, the zoo's director of elephant habi-

tats and one of North America's leading Asian elephant experts. "Elephants live in matriarchal herds, and if all goes as we hope, the entire herd will bond around this new baby and help care for him or her, just as they have with Samudra."

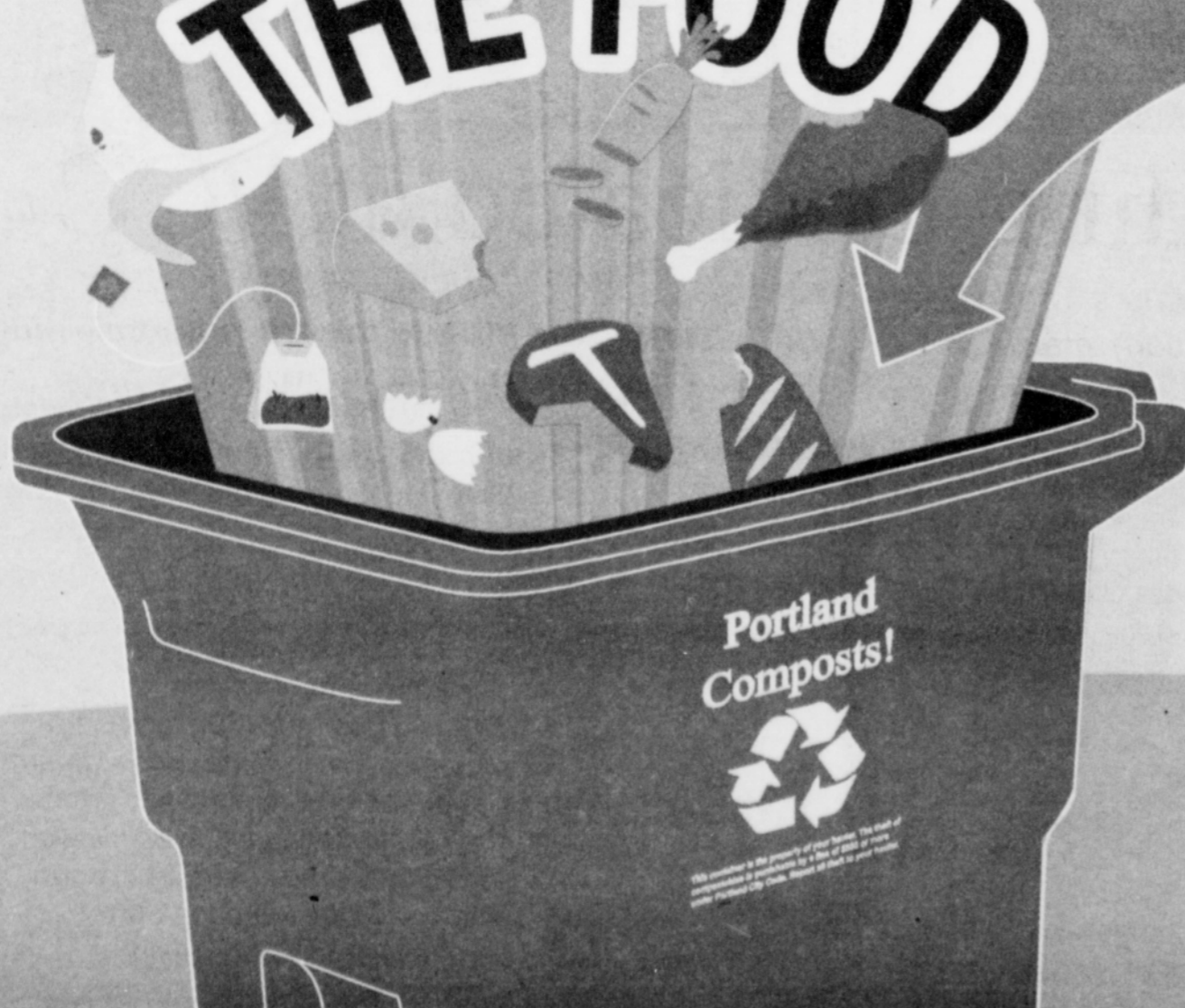
Keele cautions that it is still quite early in Rose-Tu's pregnancy, and the birth of a healthy baby is no sure thing.

"We're hopeful for the best, but there are definitely risks involved," Keele said. "There can be complications for both mother and calf. A calf may be stillborn or get lodged in the birth canal. As always, we'll be monitoring this pregnancy very closely."



Rose-Tu (left) and 3-year-old Samudra enjoy some water play at the Oregon Zoo's Asian elephant habitat, while "auntie" Sung-Surin looks on.

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