

U.S.

April the Giraffe, an Internet Star, Gives Birth. Finally.

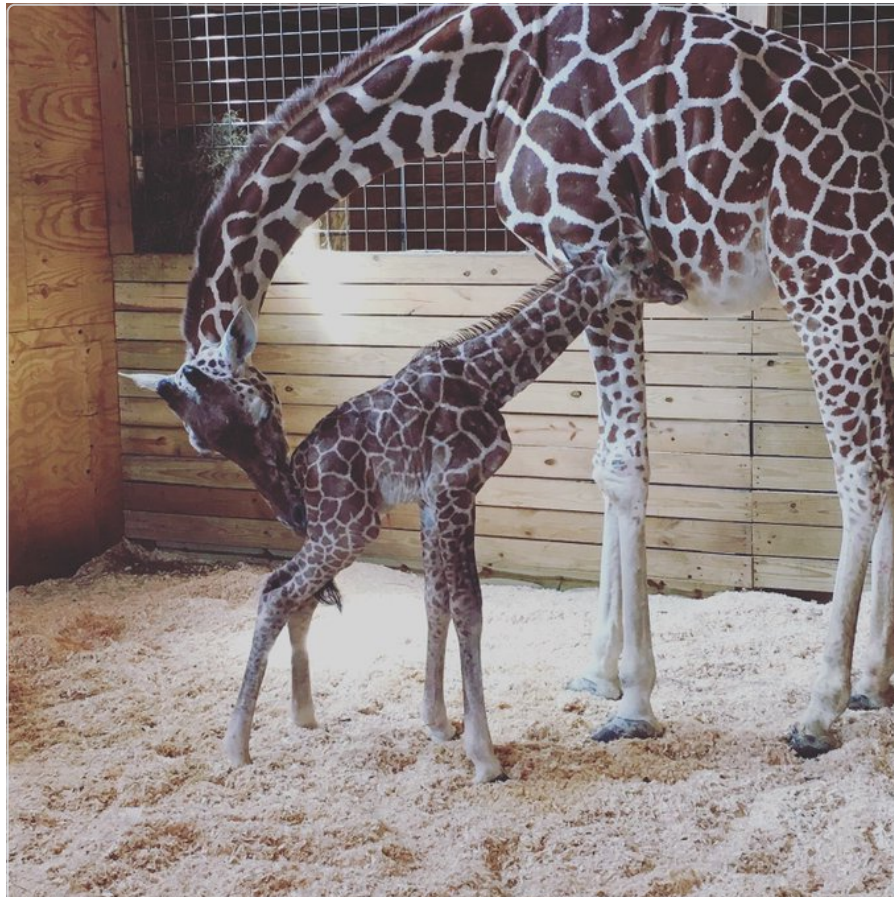
By ELI ROSENBERG APRIL 15, 2017

April, a giraffe who became an internet sensation after her pregnancy was live-streamed from the rural New York hamlet where she lives, has finally given birth, ending months of speculation and excitement for her online audience.

The live stream from Animal Adventure Park in Harpursville, N.Y., which began during the winter, drew nearly five million viewers a day at its peak. Some viewers kept checking back, even as the period in which April was expected to give birth came and went. Others became frustrated, with a few theorizing that because she had not gone into labor, she was not actually pregnant.

But as April paced in her pen on Saturday, two hooves began to appear. After a few hours, a newly born giraffe was lying on the floor, glancing around, looking as bewildered as any newborn. The calf tried to stand a few times but could not. An hour later, it was on its feet, walking around gingerly. A spokesman for the animal park said the calf was a boy.

“After many months of pregnancy, both mom and calf are doing fine,”

**April The Giraffe**

@AprilTheGiraffe

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12:06 PM - 15 Apr 2017

7,908

22,053

At its peak, the live stream drew a flood of media coverage and attention for Harpursville, a community of 3,500 about three hours northwest of New York City. The question now is whether that attention will translate into an economic boost for the area, part of a region known as the Southern Tier that was once a manufacturing powerhouse but that has struggled financially in recent years.

There were already signs that April's fame was reverberating in the area. One family recently arrived at the park after driving from Ohio, only to find it closed for the winter, said Mr. Carroll, who added that he had heard about a dozen similar stories. A hotel in nearby Binghamton has booked more than 100 reservations for a package that includes admission to the animal park when it reopens in May, according to Jennifer Conway, the president and chief executive of the Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce.

Multiple interstate highways pass through the area, and Ms. Conway said a display to alert tourists to April's presence was being planned for a rest stop on Interstate 81. "We're going to embrace them as a community," she said. "You only get this once in a lifetime."

The park and Harpursville, which has only a couple of convenience stores and restaurants, are working on their ability to handle crowds. "There's not a stoplight in the entire town," Mr. Carroll said.

April's handlers had initially predicted that the birth would come between mid-January and mid-February, but then the pregnancy stretched on. So did the live stream, which often showed April strolling in her pen rather uneventfully. Attention began to wane.

But social media erupted with cheers on Saturday after April gave birth. "This is the best day ever," wrote one person. "CONGRATS #AprilTheGiraffe," wrote another, "YOU DID IT."

There will be a contest to name the calf, and April will begin to raise him, weaning him for at least six months, according to the park. Eventually, the baby giraffe, April's fourth, will be moved to a separate facility. The father, Oliver, is not expected to be in the picture much.

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