

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

February, 2010

True Love

Anthropomorphic is a word that describes the attribution of human characteristics to non-human animals. Justifiably, we do this at the Folsom Zoo Sanctuary all the time. There's no doubt that handsome wolf **Granite** fell in love with beautiful female wolf **Redbud** the first time he saw her. He was a year older than the pesky puppy who moved into his life. A perfect photo on a sunny spring morning tells the story. Granite has a stick clenched in his big teeth and is casting what is an unmistakably fond look at the gangly 6-month puppy named Redbud who's pulling on the other end. During their lives together their greetings were affectionate, their play flirtatious.

After Granite's passing last year, staff kept a close watch on the relationship between Redbud and young male wolves **Yucca** and **Joshua**. Early on when they were too forward she would lay back her alpha female ears and show her big bad wolf teeth and they would retire. But nearly fifteen-year old Redbud became increasingly frail. After consultations and veterinary exams that showed spinal degeneration she was gently euthanized in early February. With spring, tiny blossoms are coming out on the redbud bush behind the Wolf Exhibit, perhaps to remind us that beautiful wild things renew themselves and remain with us.

Fisher and Door #4

The **Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary Black Bear Exhibit** is a Model for the World (especially if you have a bear or two). The big outside tree-shaded exhibits with nifty water features and bear hammocks, etc. are truly bear-friendly. But it's the off-exhibit area that required a lot of design savvy. A long hallway runs between the outside yards and the inside bear holding pens. Drop gates and hefty doors / gates let keepers safely switch bears from one outdoor exhibit to another which means that all five bears can have new views frequently.

In the off-exhibit area, keepers can move bears from den to den to separate them for meals or to move them next door so cleaning can commence. Heavy counter-weighted drop gates are raised and lowered by electric motors. Alas, recently the motor on Door #4 fell off, stopping the door 10 inches short of closing. So a staffer clambered onto the metal roof (sounding no doubt considerably larger and more bear-threatening than she really is) to manually drop the door. Which slammed shut with a BANG! making 600- pound bear Fisher even less happy. Since non-human animals are more farsighted than people, Fisher tends to choose the alternate route when he changes dens.

What Big Eyes You Have

Like many nocturnal animals, ringtail **Chaos** has big eyes, one of which has recently undergone a corneal graft at **Animal Eye Center** in Rocklin. We are very grateful to **Dr. Lana Linton** for donating a portion of veterinary services. Handsome Chaos is back home and looking and seeing good.

Porcine Dentistry

For Zoo pig **Templeton**, and presumably all boars, growing tusks, the bigger the better, is *macho*. There are downsides, one being that boar tusks are trophies. Not a problem for well-loved sanctuary pig Templeton whose concerns are dental. X-rays and a vet check by **Dr. Heller** at **UC Davis Large Animal Hospital** showed that instead of growing outside the lower jaw and pointing upward this two-pronged tusk was growing back under his tongue. The errant tusk was clipped short and staff will be alert for re-growth. On his return to the Zoo pasture both Templeton and his long pink tongue were a little droopy.

More Dentistry

There's been concern that tiger Pouncer had a tooth problem, too. Thanks to lots of training she walked calmly into the tiger crate for a trip to **Loomis Basin Veterinary Hospital** where she was spayed and an infected back tooth was pulled. As an animal ages, spaying can prevent serious health problems. Tiger Misty is now in training to "crate up" for the same procedure in the near future.

Gastropexy

Statistically, a canine that is big, narrow chested, active, lean, and fed one large meal a day is at risk for *gastric dilatation – volvulus (GDV)* – the stomach bloats and may twist, cutting off outflow and inflow. Most instances of GDV occur at night, and studies show that more than 70% of afflicted animals without an emergency gastropexy die. In breeds with body types that are high risk, experts recommend preventative gastropexy, a procedure which "tacks" the stomach wall to the body to prevent twisting and alleviate bloating. Zoo canines **Harrison** and **Rex** succumbed to bloat. Cases of bloat, if caught early can be treated but mortality is near 30%. If the stomach is twisted, emergency surgery is required.

Big Livestock Guarding Dog **Cheyenne** is back at work after preventive gastropexy surgery. Recovery routine included 5 small meals a day, lots of rest and TLC. She spent recovery days lying around Zoo offices, and over-filled the front seat of Zoo Supervisor Jill Lute's small car when they traveled home together for all-night-care. Other appropriate Zoo canines are slated for this life-saving, money-saving procedure.

Egg Bound

Colombian Rainbow Boa **Cleo** just wasn't herself. Ignored her tasty formerly-frozen mice. Listless. Keepers checked temperature and humidity, made sure she was soaking in her snake trough, consulted with veterinary snake experts and fretted a lot. The thing is, snakes can go for a long time doing not much of anything and be OK. But maybe not. Ultimately, exploratory surgery discovered that Cleo was egg-bound. She's back to her hungry, active self with a 16-inch incision down her snaky underside to show off.

West Nile Guardians

Sacramento Yolo Mosquito Vector Control delivered cages, food, bedding, automatically-filled water bowls and seven Leghorn hens to a secluded area above the pasture as part of a West Nile Vector control project. The Vector Control people stop by weekly to check on the hens and to draw blood for the West Nile study.

West Nile virus was first identified in 1937 in Uganda and was found in the United States in 1999. Mosquitoes become infected by biting infected wild birds. It can be passed on when they bite you or horses or other birds. At the Zoo Sanctuary all birds, horse Gus and pony Sterling are inoculated yearly to prevent West Nile infection.

Eliminate standing water where the little bug guys thrive. In June, plan to adopt one of the lovely Leghorns who have dedicated most of their lives to taking care of you.

The Joy of Deer

When the Zoo receives a roadkilled deer it goes in the freezer for a month to eradicate ticks and other crawly things. Picture this: a sunny afternoon and the sound of a reciprocating saw behind the kitchen. It's a staffer removing this & that from a still-frozen carcass. With no offense to resident deer and wild members of their clan, a deer snack is appreciated by Zoo eagles, hawks, owls, and ravens. Bear Fisher denned up for two days with his deer snack.

Stepping Up

With the loss of the **Zoo Education Department** due to budget cuts last year, the **Docents** (bless 'em) committed themselves to doing exactly what needed to be done. They Thought Outside the Box and reconstituted the Ed Dept. Docent volunteer hours soared during the planning meetings and have continued upward as they work to train new (also exceptional) Docents, maintain the Ed Office with the daily COD (not the fish, the Chair of the Day) work the phone and computer to answer questions, organize tours, classes and camps – and then lead the tours, classes and camps. As part of this New Day, Zoo staff provides lots of classes and hands-on experiences working with animals from owls and hawks, to snakes and skink (only one) to llamas, Sterling & Gus, donkey girls and more. This effort expands Education Programs exponentially.

Not On The Glove

As part of the training program, a Docent was asking Barn owl **Grayson** to "come to the glove." A falconer's glove is a spiffy creation, leather with a long cuff in case your taloned bird missteps. Several visitors were watching quietly. Our Docent has a lot of experience with animals, and she's well aware that standing under an owl with the expectation that he will come to the glove isn't necessarily a good thing to do. It wasn't. After the warm plop on the top of her head there was the additional tell-tale sensation of something warm running down her neck and soaking into the collar of her shirt. In a fine example of Grace Under Pressure, she scooped water from Grayson's bucket, sort-of-cleaned-up and retired to the Zoo Ops Building. Asking a keeper to access the damage the reply wasn't exactly what she'd hoped for. "Your shirt looks good but there are still a few white streaks in your hair".

Llama Lore

Training experiences are noted in the **Daily Journal** and often the language is specific and colorful. As part of an on-going effort, Docents with halters were gently approaching **Dolche** and **Palino** to accustom the llamas to being led for walking excursions in visitor areas. The llamas moseyed to a corner. Docents approached. At some point in this timeframe one of the llamas spit. Probably not at the humans; most likely at the other llama. Describing llama spit is graphic: "not the dreaded full-on-green-spit" but just regular llama spit. Is the "dreaded green" reserved for backing off humans?

Fisher's Beastro Now Open!

Beginning menu goodies include fresh-baked cookies, gourmet hotdogs, nachos & guac,

Zoobrew Coffee! gourmet teas, drinks,

New Goodies every week!

Rright in front of the Zoo!

Sunny day seating!

Friends of the Folsom Zoo Sanctuary

MASQUERADE FASHION

SHOW

Saturday, April 17

Folsom Community Center

Doors Open 7 p.m.

Advance tickets \$15 / \$20 at the door

*Art Show! Silent Auction! Photo
Booth!*

Masks provided (or dazzle with your own!)

Tickets on-line : jessicastout@gmail.com

"SHEAR" EXCITEMENT!

At the Zoo Sanctuary!

Saturday, April 24 - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sheep shearing demo 11 a.m.

All day Llama shearing demo!

Plus: knitters, spinners, kid's stuff and more!

rratcliff@folsom,ca,us