

# KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

February – March, 2013

Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary! Fifty Years Of Loving Animals!

(At one time a pig sty was located inside Zoo grounds.) February, 2002. **Pig Running** “Once again Keepers have engaged in the arcane sport of **Pig Running**. Athletic and feral, pig **Charlotte** once again vaulted over the low inner fence of the sty and was doubtless preparing to bulldoze through the heavy gauge wire panel of the newly repaired safety fence gate when she was discovered. Bags of bagels were gathered and members of the **Zoocrew** let Charlotte out. Pig Running requires skill, fortitude and endurance. Pig and runners position on their marks, facing the goal. The first bagel chunk is tossed goalward. Charlotte hustles over and eats it. And so on. All is going well. Until the white peacock, in full feathered regalia, flaps down in Charlotte’s path. Alarmed, Charlotte whips back toward the sty. (In the sport of Pig Running this is technically a *fowl*.) The effort begins again. This time Charlotte gets half-way to the goal, when the wolf-dog hybrids and livestock guarding dogs begin to bark. Once again Charlotte reverses her field. (Pigs, not bendable, turn of-a-piece.) Human players, tired from running, and out of breath from laughing, ended the goal attempt. Strangely enough, the Zoo hasn’t been contacted by the **Olympic Committee**. Yet.”

## Do The Math

From the **Zookeeper Daily Journal**. “Rats will not be delivered as there is a shortage. We might have to substitute rats for quail or half & half; 17 mice = the weight of one rat so we’d use too many if we replaced all rats with mice. For example: eagles on a usual rat day could have 3 quail and 14 mice. (3 quail replace 2 rats, 14 mice replace 2 rats.) Maggie coyote could have something similar for her rat replacement” Questions? Drop by the Zoo Kitchen anytime. Currently, the rat shortage has been alleviated. For now.

## The Coconut

Recently several coconuts were included along with fresh greens & fruit & veggies generously donated by **The Fresh Market** in Roseville. The bear keeper chucked the coconut into the back of the Gator along with the five big stainless steel bowls of beautiful bear brunch and drove to the exhibit. Like the rest of us, bears look forward to meals and it seemed logical that **Henry**, the youngest bear, would get the coconut. The keeper rolled the coconut into the den. Since wild California black bears don’t encounter coconuts in the forest, Henry sat a while and thought about what to do. He pushed the coconut with a paw, and sniffed it. Rolled it around. And discovered that he couldn’t quite get enough of a grip with his strong jaws to bite it open. So he ran out the den door and down the hall to the exhibit with the coconut clutched in his short front teeth. And sat thinking for a bit on a rock. Then ran back to the den at top speed. He plopped down and clearly looked at the keeper with an expression that said “now what?”

At this point the keeper had collected several more coconuts for other bears, so she called Henry’s attention, chose a coconut and slammed it onto the concrete floor as hard as she could.

At this point she moved on to serve more bear meals – when she heard Henry slam the coconut on the den floor. She walked back to find him happily licking up coconut milk.

How did the other bears do? Talented little female bear **Tahoe** faked out big male **Sequoia** and efficiently flipped the coconut over her shoulder to break it open. **Marty & Woody** unwillingly traded it back and forth until one of them won the prize.

## Sad Times

In May, 2001, four captive-born red fox pups, **Jasper**, **Forrest**, **Fern** and **Isabella** moved to the **Zoo Sanctuary**. Now at age 12 they could be considered elderly. Sadly, during morning rounds, Fern was found down and dragging her left rear leg, clearly in pain. At the vet hospital x-rays taken under anesthesia showed a bad fracture that would have required complex surgery with no assurance of success. In consultation with staff and Zoo veterinarians, it was decided that due to her advanced age and cancer issues, that euthanasia was appropriate and humane. Of the original four foxes only Isabella survives.

Last year duck **Phyllis** joined drake **Fergus** and the other farm birds that live peacefully together in the big **Aviary**

**Exhibit.** Since the shallow duck pond is close to visitors this good-looking couple was very popular with the public. Sadly, Phyllis passed away recently. These truly are sad times at the **Zoo Sanctuary**.

### Signs Of Spring

Wednesday March 13, 2013 was the first sighting of a big red rooster constructing a dust bath in the front yard of the **Zoo Classroom**. Years ago the Zoo's free-roaming fowl created a sizeable dust bath area at the site where blue and gold macaws **Rocky & Bingo** now reside in their spiffy exhibit. Dust bathing birds create a lot of human consternation since in spring and summer a substantial number of concerned Zoo visitors report seeing "dying or dead" chickens. Actually, dust bathing is beneficial for ridding the birds of parasites. Birds get down – and yes, by human standards, dirty. Then they lie on their sides in the sun, eyes closed, zoned out while another worried visitor seeks assistance for the bird.

**Attendance for February 2013 a hefty 10,535.**

### Theodora

Beautiful little brown rabbit **Theodora** has touches of black on her ears, a wiggly nose and a charming personality. Found in the wild as a youngster, she was dropped off at a rescue facility where she spent three years as a well-loved pet. At the **Zoo Sanctuary** Theodora is taking over duties as an **Outreach Animal**. When introduced to resident rabbit **Kevin** they were separated by getting-to-know-you wire fencing. It was not long before clever Kevin hopped the fence and any concerns that they might not be the best of friends were gone. Yes, Kevin is neutered.

### Mint Breath

Blame it on **Girl Scout Cookies**. Recently two staffers moseyed down to the deer enclosure to gather up some – *um*- deer effluent for a **UC Davis** study of various animal feces, both wild and captive. The keepers had been munching on some Girl Scout cookies little knowing that deer are greatly attracted to Chocolate Thin Mints. Ever go face to face with two deer sniffing your breath?

### How Important Decisions Are Made At The Zoo

Because she was on medication, opossum **Orchid** has spent the fall and winter in the warm quiet **Zoo Classroom** in a crate that's enclosed with a little fence. She waddles out for breakfast and spends the rest of the day in her crate, upside down, snoring gently, pink hairless feet in the air. When staff was making decisions about which over-winter animals would go back outside this spring it was decided (this is a quote) "Orchid, the

opossum will stay indoors because she likes it indoors." OK.

### New Barn Owl

Apparently her left leg was broken and partially healed in the wild. Fortunately she was found and brought to **Stanislaus Wildlife Rescue**. Now named **Guinevere** she moved to the **Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary** as a companion for male **Grayson**. Both birds are currently "off exhibit" while they become accustomed to each other in large separate quarantine cages next to **Zoo Ops Building**.

Researchers have discovered that young barn owls can be impressively generous toward one another, regularly donating portions of their food to smaller, hungrier siblings. This display of altruism is thought to be rare among nonhuman animals. Scientists also discovered that barn owls express needs and desires with each other through a complex, rule-based series of calls, trills, barks and hoots, a language researchers are now seeking to decipher. We know from **Wild Nights, Holiday Lights** local barn owls have been at the Zoo vocalizing with Grayson. they've even left behind wild mouse treats for him.

### The Zoo's First Public Snake Exhibit

Since early days rescued snakes have lived at the **Zoo Sanctuary** but while they engage in public visits with the assistance of **Docents**, snakes have not been on regular exhibit. Now the large former storage area that backs up Grayson's (and hopefully now Guinevere's) quarters in the **Red Barn** will be converted to a warm climate controlled new home for snakes. For humans the good news is that they will be able to view the snakes through a big 6 x 6 foot window which for the snakes is thermal paned to control temperature. Other mod cons include heat & air and a sink for snake soaking.

## We Love Bugs

**Saturday May 11 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Release Thousands Of Ladybugs! 11 a.m.**

**Bear Henry Eats Honeycomb at Noon!**

**Plus silkworms! Cockroaches! Bug Craft!**

**And Lots More!**

**Spring Break Jr. Zookeeper Camp Mar 25-29**

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