

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

February - March 2012

Spoiled Ducks

It's not easy to spoil ducks. Really. Generations of survivor ducks have inherited a healthy respect for humans, who after all, eat duck soup, roast duck, Duck a la Orange. Etc. But ducks are very smart. At the **Folsom Zoo Sanctuary** gentle humans clean the duck's home: nothing to worry about with a nicely raked duck yard and clean water for the pond. And, from **Docents**, lots of gentle admiration. And spoiling. Docents spend a lot of time proving to drake **Fergus** and duck **Fiona** that humans are duck-friendly. In fact, there's a purple park bench in the exhibit so Docents can hang out with the ducks. In the past, Fiona has been somewhat shy, but Fergus will waddle over for treats and socializing. He'll sit on the bench and takes Certain Liberties, pushing beak and head up under the Docent's long sleeve to groom her arm. There's also the corn-issue: Nutritious Mazuri wild duck chow is a little smaller than a pea and one of the Docents adds fresh corn kernels for training. It works quite well: the ducks gobble down chow and corn and cleverly spit out everything but the corn.

Animal Placemats

The fact that tortoise **Donatello** and prehensile-tailed skink **Solomon** have attractive little plastic placemats should not be construed as "spoiling." Since the shell of this small tortoise is low-slung, he tends to hang-up on his food bowl. Skinks have some elevation issues, too.

Mesa Misses Nothing

It has been mentioned before that lovely African Gray Parrot **Mesa** perfectly imitates the beep-beep-beep of backing trucks. Recently she was looking out the **Classroom** window when she noticed a big truck parked outside the Zoo Kitchen. Delivery completed, it backed up – not beeping – to turn around. No worries. Mesa *beep-beep* -beeped on the truck's behalf.

Big Girls

As you are aware, female golden eagles are substantially larger than males. Recently an observer saw female **Sierra** making a move on a formerly frozen rat near male **Pinyon** and bumped him right off the perch. (Possibly this was not an accident.) Using his impressively sharp talons Pinyon was able to hang sideways for a moment before agilely dropping down to another perch. With the advent of Spring, both birds are spending a little time in the big human-designed eagle nest. They sometimes eat there and

have been spotted adjusting limbs, which may, or may not, be nesting behavior.

Big Red Wheels

Squeeze cages are invaluable aids in large animal care. Left in den or exhibit areas on a regular basis, animals will willingly move through them as part of daily routine. Recently, the swivel wheels on the tiger squeeze cage were replaced with some stylin' big red wheels making it easier to move around. One problem: tigers, between important stuff like meals and naps, would be tempted to chew on the wheels. So the Zoo's steadfast repair person invented a clever wheel guard that is removable only with a screwdriver which the tigers do not have.

How We Spent Our Spring Break

On Monday March 12 eleven students and their advisor showed up at the **Zoo Sanctuary** at 9 a.m. sharp to begin a week of seriously hard work. They extra-cleaned wolf, bear, tiger, mountain lion, wolf-dog hybrid exhibits. They literally hauled a ton of decomposed granite in buckets to fill in dig-holes in fox, squirrel, black bear, tiger, mountain lion, Amazon parrot, raven, and coyote exhibits. They put up a round pen for horses and re-sloped the zebu enclosure. Removed tree limbs from exhibits, trimmed bushes, weeded, cut back blackberry and hauled it away, repainted nearly all the Zoo Sanctuary fences and not-one-time backed down on a work project we requested. They were universally pleasant and enthusiastic. As it turned out, the Zoo ran out of work before they ran out of enthusiasm so we "gave them the day off" on Friday.

It is important to note that these twelve hardworking folks came all the way from **Black Hills State University** in Spearfish South Dakota which is more than a hop, skip & a jump from home. This is how they spent their Spring Break. We were honored by their presence.

Sad Times

For everyone, time spent with and for the animals is important in our lives. We're saddened by their passing, but recall their idiosyncrasies - and charm - and our good fortune in knowing them.

Bill

Greenwing macaw **Bill** came to the **Zoo Sanctuary** as an adult in 1984. His exact age is unknown. Back in the days

when the Zoo was much smaller, Bill spent some quality time sitting on a perch in the kitchen prep area. This provided some of the social interaction that's important to members of the parrot family. Did Bill get snacks? Yes. Did Bill occasionally bite a zoostaffer. Yes. Was Bill also handsome, charming and very, very smart? Absolutely. In the past two years, Bill has had some serious health issues. Surprisingly, even though diagnostic tests were less than encouraging, Bill's attitude seemed to bloom. Sadly, Bill passed away on February 23.

Baby Girls Baby

In 2001 an egg laid by a lovely Folsom househen named **Baby Girl** hatched and the chick was logically named **Baby Girl's Baby**. He grew to be a handsome rooster and every morning he would crow to wake up the sun. This made neighbors unhappy. A **City of Folsom Code Enforcement Officer** knocked on the door where Baby Girl's Baby lived and said he needed to find a new home. So BGB moved to the **Zoo Sanctuary** where he could, and did, crow all the time and everybody loved him. He visited schools and taught thousands of kids about the importance of birds. Baby Girls Baby passed away recently of age-related health problems.

Astounding February Attendance! 11,337 substantially topping last year's 8,488.

Friends?

Let your Mind's Eye wander through the **Zoo Sanctuary Black Bear Exhibit**. There are three large outside pens, each with grass and oak trees, bear caves and water features. A back "alley way" separates the outside pens from room-like dens, plus an outside enclosure with a pool in case an ailing bear needs some recuperation time. The first bear enclosure is completely covered with "bear-impermeable" stainless steel woven wire, which is where young expert climber **Henry** hangs out. The other two exhibits have lean-in fence tops and hotwire which is standard in newer zoos.

When little Henry arrived he was sequestered away from the other bears for safety reasons. This provided time to install indestructible fine mesh metal panels on some exhibit fencing to prevent access with tooth & claw by adult bears. Henry is growing, currently weighing in at 260 pounds of fun. And while he still likes to race along the bear tunnel adjacent to the dens (with a keeper trying to match his pace in the hallway on the other side) he's been seen quietly communing through den wire with adult bear **Woody**. There's a little co-grooming and gentle patting through the wide-spaced den fence wire.

Polish Fancy

Occasionally someone will drop off an unwanted chicken in **Folsom City Lions Park**. Unfortunately, given the existing free-roaming rooster / hen social structure a lot of the discarded birds can't fend for themselves. A case in point is **Feliks** (a Polish word for *lucky*) a dandy looking Polish Fancy rooster. He's lanky and tall with white feathers over-laid with gold. His tall upright tail is folded into a V and his head is covered with a mop of feathers that droop down almost over his bright red chicken cheeks to the tip of his yellow beak. And his feet! Six toes on the left, four on the right. Plus a bunch of three-inch long white feathers sticking out from each foot (think snowshoes worn sideways) clearly intended more for show than agility. Currently he resides in an off-exhibit enclosure where a big free-roaming red rooster stands watch outside in a most unfriendly manner. With the passing of BGB Feliks will take over the care of hens **Lotte** and **Henny Penny**.

Spring Break Junior Zookeeper Camp

Learn hands-on what it's like to be a Zookeeper! Prepare food, make toys, participate in animal handling, grooming, and cleaning exhibits.

April 2 – 6 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Fee: \$ 330 / \$289 resident

Acclaimed Animal Art Event*

The Painted Cork Sutter Street

Saturday, April 14 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

"... playfully abstract forms reminiscent of Post Impressionism and Fauvism "

quoting Award winning artist Joshua Canis lupus

We Love Bugs!

Saturday, May 19 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Visit some not-so-creepy-crawlies like meal worms, silk worms and fishing worms! Learn about bee-friendly plants for your garden! See how bronze sculptures of insects are created! Capture some gummy worms!

Join in the ladybug release at 11:30!

And more.

Need info? 916-870-5351