

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

March – April, 2013

The Zoo Is Fifty Years Old!

Better Every Day!

Back to December 12, 2000, “Rats! Properly reviewed, rats might well serve as good examples to humans. They’re smart and hard working. Rat moms are excellent parents. Rats Pay Attention. And being opportunists, rats can make a living nearly everywhere. A particularly attractive rat hangout is the **Folsom Zoo** where there’s lots of food (when you are smart and stealthy). Nice places to den up. The neighbors leave something to be desired, of course. Rat parts are occasionally found in exhibits of the Zoo’s more serious predators. Oddly enough, one of the most adept hunters is senior monkey **Claudia**. “She has a special rat scream,” says keeper **Jill Lute**. “You hear it and you know Claudia has spotted a RAT.” And Claudia goes after the rats. Usually they’re just a little quicker, but several weeks ago, Jill heard The Scream, and spotted a tail-less rat fleeing for it’s life.”

Joshua

During early morning rounds on May 13, a Zookeeper found wolf **Joshua** down with both back legs caught in exhibit fencing. It was obvious that he did not have use of either of his legs even after they were freed. Both Zoo **Veterinarian Mira Sanchez** and **Animal Control Officer Cindy Walden** were contacted and arrived at the Zoo to provide assistance. After he was sedated, Dr. Sanchez determined that his legs were not broken, but did support Zoo staff’s decision for euthanasia due to what most likely was a serious spinal injury. Like all Zoo animals over the years Joshua will be cremated and return to the Zoo.

Many Hands Make Light Work

On a very warm Saturday in late April the **Mormon Helping Hands Group** approximately 100 strong worked wonders at the **Zoo Sanctuary**. The **Front Wall Group** removed ancient peeler cores that had truly seen better days and, generously working overtime, erected the new wall that is not only eye-catching but provides additional safety.

The **Pasture Group** tackled the steep area that over the years produced more rocks than Folsom gold-mining areas and created serious safety issues for beasts, volunteers and staff. They carefully filled pig wallows with DG or rocks to discourage mosquito hoards. Adjacent keeper areas were trimmed, weeded - renewed.

At the deer enclosure the Zoo creek continues downhill through an oak forest, and the canyon becomes increasingly steep. Perfect for deer, not so much for humans. The **Canyon Group** solution? Thirty hand-

crafted board & DG steps, three flights in all, providing serious safety improvements for staff and deer. (Yes, we saw the deer using the stairs the same day.)

Holly Barks At Starbucks

On their way to spend many hot, sunny, hours at the wolf exhibit pulling a zillion foxtails and generally cleaning up, trimming, and raking, the **Roseville Starbucks** staff were organizing in the **Zoo Classroom** where they were admiring lovely prairie dog **Holly** who was watching them from her three story condo. The thoughtful humans were appropriately standing back, commenting (truthfully) “she’s soooooo cute,” etc. Holly was having none of this adulation, her (adorable) ears laid back, two-buck teeth shining, barking and barking at her admirers. Although, sadly, she’s far from a high desert prairie dog mound, she was warning her clan about these obviously dangerous humans.

During the work day, the conversation came around to worms, and how not everyone loves them. But worms also had their defenders. Did you know that earthworms (yes, those common pinkish-gray crawly things) *Limbricus terrestris* help increase the amount of air and water that gets into soil? They break down organic matter like leaves and grass into nutrition plants can use. When worms eat, they leave behind castings that are a very valuable kind of fertilizer. Worms “turn the soil” bringing down organic matter from the top and mixing it with the soil below.

Say, for example, lucky you have 500,000 worms living on one acre of soil. They could make 50 TONS of castings and improve drainage of your farm and garden. It’s thought that during the last Ice Age worms were probably wiped out in North America, resulting in very

poor growing conditions. Alas. But in the 1600's and 1700's European settlers brought in plants from the Old Country – and the heroic *Limbricus* tagged along in the soil. Lucky us.

The Owl Couple

It took a bit of time but lovely new owl **Guinevere** has decided perhaps handsome male owl **Grayson** may not be so bad after all. When she first arrived, Grayson was moved next door to Guinevere. These off-exhibit enclosures are bird friendly, with lots of limbs, a stump for serving rodent delicacies, and a big doghouse in each area. Immediately Grayson focused on his lovely neighbor or possibly on the formerly frozen mice on her stump. Guinevere retired into her doghouse and was rarely seen. She apparently collected her mice at night. Days passed. Eventually, Grayson hopped on a branch near her. She crouched and hissed in a most discouraging way

A Docent reported that Grayson showed great interest in Guinevere, and tried a dozen times to calmly approach her - and was chased away every time with loud hisses. Guinevere moved into her house. Grayson followed. Big mistake. But time passed, and one day when Grayson hopped inside the doghouse, there was the sound of a squabble, then silence – and what possibly was a giggle (if owls giggle) and the owl couple has been together ever since.

Visitors! During March and April 2013 the Zoo was jammed: 24,533! and the Docents were on top of it. (14,395 last year which is impressive, too.)

Chocolate Breath

We blamed it on **Girl Scout Chocolate Mint Cookies** when two staffers, having restored their strength with GS cookies went down to the deer enclosure to gather a bag-full of what-deer-leave-behind for a **UC Davis** study, and found themselves face to face with a deer sniffing their mint chocolate breath. Recently a staffer having munched on a chocolate M&M had a similar experience with prairie dog **Holly**. Possibly we could volunteer for a scientific study.

We Love Ladybugs! Apparently We Are Not Alone

Our thanks to Star **ECO Station**, beekeeper **Jeremy Brickner** with his glass enclosed beehive, and the **Amazing Docents** for showing both kids and adults why everyone should admire and defend bugs. Apparently the word was out and on **We Love Bugs** day there were lots

of visiting parents, little ones in tow asking where the ladybugs were being released. So at 11 a.m. there was a serious crowd on what we call **Lombard Street** after the original steep Lombard Street in San Francisco which is nothing like the Zoo's Lombard which is in front of the pasture animal's exhibit. Approximately 4,000 ladybugs were gently deposited in little hands so the bugs could be gently released into the garden area. Most were. Some, of course, ended up on the walkway, but little humans sat right down, legs akimbo, and rescued each tiny bug. After the release visitors moved on to watch as young black bear **Henry** received his honeycomb, thanks to the generosity of beekeeper Jeremy.

Who Knew?

The few ladybugs left in the containers were gently placed on one of the deer enclosure fence tops so they could carry on with their lives. Remaining Zoofolks noted that there were two sizes – Regular and Small. Logically Small would be youngsters and the Large ladybugs would be adult females and males. Until it was noted that the persistent Little bugs were climbing onto the backs of the Bigr bugs clearly with romance in mind.

Strong Hands & Determination

Monkey **Wallace** was spotted just in time as he was unscrewing the eyebolts that hold the metal screen in place on the window adjacent to the feral cat community. While this would not have been the beginning of a monkey escape because there is yet another screen inside, it would not be a good thing. /As you know Wallace occasionally has seizures. so several bars of the “inside” screen have been removed so Wallace can present his leg for blood draws. Yes, he gets treats. And yes, the outside screen now has several carabineers to thwart monkey business.

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