

# KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

September – October 2011

## The Trainer

Given his small stature and name it was highly unlikely that rooster **Baby Girl's Baby** was going to rule the roost at the **Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary** thus long ago he sought a career in teaching. On weekends a Zookeeper might deploy a small fence on the bear deck. Little humans step over the fence and handsome Baby Girl's Baby stands in the middle. The Zookeeper demonstrates with a wooden pointer stick, a clicker and some tasty corn. Click! On cue Baby Girl's job is to tap the end of the stick with his beak. Corn is the reward. Think for a moment of your two-year old holding the pointer stick steady in one hand and clicking with the other hand. Even for an adult there's a concentration issue. BGB is a pro and waits patiently as each youngster gets organized. Click. He taps the stick and moves on around the circle.

Training is an important part of **Folsom Zoo Sanctuary** routine. Animals will step up on the scales. At a hand signal bears stand tall so keepers can look for any dings on the underbody, and open their mouths on cue for a dental check. Monkeys present an arm at the blood draw station. Animals will move on cue from one area to another. Or paint amazing works of art. Every day each animal receives careful scrutiny to note any injury however slight or early signs of illness.

On Sundays visitors follow along as a keeper "plays" the Training Game with six sets of animals – currently tigers, foxes, macaques, raccoons, bears and wolves so that certain behaviors become routine and rewarded. For example, new foxes **Mindy** and **Mojo** quickly figured out that running through a long pipe in the exhibit earned a treat which, as with humans, focuses the mind. The pipe isn't the point – but moving willingly from one place to another is.

## Leaves Of Three

Poison oak was on the **Zoo Camp** agenda one day this summer and lots of information was acquired in the Classroom. But there's nothing like a real experience of seeing the actual plant so an orderly line of campers went marching through **Folsom Lions Park** and down oak forest trails toward the river where the poison oak grows. The teacher explained that she would point at out poison oak and call out "Poison Oak!" Each person following would do the same. And off they went: Kid One "poison oak" Kid Two "poison oak" Kid Three etc. Until from the

very end of the line everyone heard "Oh, Oh!" The group rushed back to find the last Camper standing in the midst of some very healthy plants bearing Leaves Of Three. His comment? "It's OK. I'm an explorer."

## Getting To Know You #1

Senior mountain lions at the **Zoo Sanctuary** have come to know the truth in the old saying "cats don't play they practice." Early on mentor cougar **Ventura** was entrusted with teaching some manners (not *lots* of manners, just some) to the orphaned youngster named **Cedar**.

A Docent's notes cover one of the *meet-and-greet* occasions between young female **Flash** and Cedar who was hunkered down at the end of the exhibit. Cedar's first three charges resulted in very vocal – but short cat fights. Both animals backed off possibly providing Cedar with time to reconsider. Her next four charges ended with Cedar backing down as soon as Flash growled.

Finally, days of diligent observation of Cedar in action led Zookeepers to the conclusion that all four cats could safely be together at one time. Staff and Docents gathered in front of the exhibit and watched as Cedar chased, snarled, pounced on, swatted at and otherwise made annoying moves on the older cats. Since Nature has provided some social latitude for youngsters, she survived her spate of bad manners and cougar peace reigns.

Mountain lions can be found wherever deer, their primary prey, are found. They are designated a Specially Protected Mammal in California and cannot be hunted.

*(Felis concolor, cat of one color)*

## Getting To Know You #2

Female golden eagles are bigger than males, a fact that has come home to roost (so to speak) with rescued male **Pinyon**. He had some suspicions, right from the first, when Sierra sort of leaned into him on the perches. Keepers know this too, and provided extra scrutiny. Recently Sierra wouldn't allow him to eat when food was delivered - "he gave it three solid attempts but she kept him off even as she ate." One of her pushes was so strong Pinyon landed sideways on a branch where he flapped and struggled to get his footing. He seemed OK and was noted later to have a piece of food, but throughout the day she

was crowding him on the branches. Fortunately, there are multiple ways for Staff to offer food to these big birds so Pinyon can eat peacefully.

### **Kevin**

Two abandoned pet rabbits were found by a Zoo Docent in a business/residential area. One of the rabbits had been killed: the survivor was underweight and covered with fleas but otherwise seemed to be in good health. After he was caught it was discovered that his lower teeth were growing outside of his mouth and into his nostrils. His upper teeth were overgrown as well. He's been neutered and had his teeth trimmed and filed. An application of Advantage got rid of the fleas. Handsome brown rabbit Kevin has thrived on lots of attention by everyone and already is gathering a fan club of visiting families.

### **Tortoise In The Bag**

Docents and Russian Tortoise **Donatello** attended an **American Heart Association** event at **William Land Park** recently where he was quite The Star for little kids who got to peek into the paper bag where he felt safe. Found wandering in Folsom by City Arborist **Ken Menzer**, Donatello now lives at the **Zoo Sanctuary** in a giant tub complete with two lights - one for warmth and the other for UV rays to keep him healthy, a very nice walk-in shallow pond, a faux forest of green palm trees, a box of clean soil for hiking endeavors and various size boxes for hiding. During daily housekeeping Donatello splashes in a terrarium of warm water. Afterward a soothing ointment is gently rubbed into his toes and claws since "they looked a little dry." TLC = Tortoise Loving Care.

**Zoo attendance for September 2011 was 7,900 up from last year at the same time.**

### **Missy**

Sable gray Ferret **Missy** came to the Zoo in 2007. She was joined in 2009 by white ferret **Cinnamon**. At the Zoo a ferret cage is a magical place. Although ferrets are officially illegal pets in California, pet stores are filled with items to make a ferret's life comfortable: colorful padded ferret beds, hammocks, ferret socks as a warm dark napping place for the Lanky Ones. Special food. Bath products that might replace the ferret scent that most ferret fans find irresistible. Toys. Climbing gyms. The list is long and Zoo ferrets have lots of donated goodies. Best of all, of course, are the Docents and Staff who assure that resident ferrets have playtime and loving arms on a regular basis. Unfortunately, ferret farms are not uncommon in

many states and these loveable and popular pets have been inbred and susceptible to health problems. Sadly, ferret Missy was diagnosed with a malignant tumor and was gently euthanized. We are very sad at her passing.

### **PUMPKIN PROWL**

#### **Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary**

**October 1 . November 13**

Bring your good-looking pumpkin to the **Folsom Zoo Sanctuary** and receive free admission! Everyone can participate - kids and adults of all ages! Pumpkins may be left in their natural state or you can decorate with non-toxic waterproof paints, pens or add-ons. Please don't carve or puncture the pumpkin (we want them to last!). You can display your pumpkins in special marked places in the Zoo Sanctuary. (Note: Pumpkins cannot be returned.)

### **KIDS THANKSGIVING BREAK ZOOKEEPER CAMP**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,**

**Nov. 21 - Nov. 23 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Ages 8 - 10**

**Fee \$198 \$174 Folsom resident discount**

Learn hands-on what it's like to be a Zookeeper! Prepare animal meals, make toys, and participate in animal handling / animal grooming and cleanup. On camp day you might clean the bear exhibit, make bear meals, and create enrichment toys for monkeys, ravens wolves or tigers. Or meet tortoise Donatello, groom miniature donkeys and horses and much more! Camps fill up quickly. Register now!

**For more information please call 916-351-3527 or go to [www.folsomzoo.com](http://www.folsomzoo.com)**

**[rratcliff@folsom.ca.us](mailto:rratcliff@folsom.ca.us)**