

January 2005



### Cheyenne

The recent passing of livestock guarding dog Chelsea left both a hole in our hearts and the need for another sentinel to assist livestock guard dog Harrison. Female Great Pyrenees Cheyenne was born May 10th at a ranch in Nevada. While she is perfect in many ways, her forte may not be guarding livestock. There was the incident where she and the cattle she was guarding ended up three miles down the road. And rather than imprinting on sheep or cows, she imprinted on the children in the family and would wait on the porch until they returned from school!

So she moved to the Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary. Under keeper supervision she walked the zoo grounds. And she met with Harrison on various occasions. Under supervision. Keepers were on hand when, quarantine over, she and Harrison moved into the pasture to greet the flock of goats and sheep and pigs and horse Gus that she would co-guard. True the pigs chased her just a little. She barked at big Gus, wisely from afar, and found other things to do when he moseyed toward her. And then there was The Chicken Incident. Years back, when Harrison was learning his job a few not-alive chickens were found on zoo grounds at morning rounds. Harrison was greatly shamed by this and ultimately learned that chickens were within his area of responsibility. Cheyenne had her own chicken incident recently. Keepers spotted her barking at, and chasing down, a chicken in the pasture. Awash in puppy enthusiasm, she caught up with the chicken and was mouthing it when Harrison came up and ran her off. So he could take the chicken in his mouth. A rescue attempt? Not likely, but the chicken got away with wet feathers.

Like all livestock guard dogs, Great Pyrenees have ancient mastiff ancestors. Once known as the Royal Dogs of France, Pyrenees have, as one breeder put it, "an industrial strength bark," to alert human partners. Their metabolism is slow conserves energy until the dog is needed to rout bears, coyotes, and the packs of neighborhood dogs who are the major predators on flocks in semi-rural areas. Female Pyrenees range in weight from 85-100 pounds, and their double coat makes them look even bigger to a would-be predator. Double rear dew-claws are the sign of a purebred dog: cross breeds don't have them.

The zoo-crew, possibly even including the chickens, welcome Cheyenne to the family.

## Weighing In

Keepers have been busy in recent month weighing animals. The Zoo Sanctuary keeps careful medical records for each individual animal, and accurate weight records can tell a lot.

As it is with humans, overweight or underweight can be a health issue. Weight loss can indicate illness, a bad tooth - or a ravenous roommate who's getting more than his share. An example is albino skunk Gardenia (a chunky 8.3lbs), who literally was seen sitting on raccoon thin Emma's (14.4lbs) lap eating Emma's food!



Weight gain can mean that something may be wrong: illness, a needed diet change, or a roommate whose meal is an easy mark. Nearly year-old wolf pups Joshua and Yucca still chase down alpha female Redbud because they know she'll regurgitate her meal for them.

## Jane

Blacktail deer Jane Doe is a good example of weight watching. Anyone looking at her when she arrived could see that she was way too thin. Add to this the fact that she was shedding in patches, and she was definitely a work-in-progress. Clearly, she wasn't competing well with the pasture animals - notably pushy pygmy goats George and Tammy. Research indicated that she needed lots of browse, some grain, and most of all some peace and quiet away from the goats so she could eat without interference. For several months she's been off-exhibit for a little R&R with livestock guarding dog Harrison keeping her company when he's not working. She's gone from a skinny 49 pounds to a lovely sleep 90 pounds in several months.



### Gus

At four years of age, big, golden Premarin horse Gus is pretty much grown up. Keepers work with him a lot to accustom him to daily foot care, haltering, and hands-on care in general. Weighing him was a model of Planning Ahead. The zoo scale is a simple concept: there are stainless steel weight sensors about the size of one-half a tall Starbucks cup, attached to long cables that go to the readout gizmo that looks like a sturdy laptop. The trick is to get the sensors arranged on a more-or-less level area with a board on top, or in Gus' case, a 6 x 8 piece of very thick plywood. Getting Gus to step up on the plywood is where preparation, effort and trust come in. But step up he did, all 1,107 pounds of him. According to Dr. Bob Morgan of Loomis Basin Veterinary Center Gus needs to gain 100 pounds. The joy of eating more!



For some of the smaller animals, a plywood board is part of the normal flooring of a pass-through. At weighing time, the sensors go under the board. Senior coyote Rosemary (28lbs) outweighs youngster Wild Iris (24lbs). Forrest (18lbs) is the biggest red fox, and dainty Isabella (12lbs) is smallest.

No lightweights in the raccoon complex: Scout weighs 18.2 pounds and Autumn currently is a voluptuous 20.1. Which brings us to zoo keeper/veterinary technician Lisa Dowling's note in the Daily Keeper Journal. "Dieting raccoons are naughty and cranky." Apparently they ganged up on her looking for more food than their new diets allowed, dug around the trash bag, climbed her leg, and were cranky!

### Weighty

Last year when the wolves were weighed in October Alpha Male Granite tipped the scale at a handsome 74 pounds. Zoo staff was thoughtful when 7 month old pup Joshua weighed 74

pounds too. But the January, 2005 weights tell us that Joshua has filled out to a hefty 97 pounds. Pup Yucca is somewhat smaller, at 92 pounds - and still growing!

### The Rat Out Sheet

New this year is the quick-look, tells-all color coded computer generated weight date sheet, which is the invention of keeper Carole Garrett. It lists the animals name and current weight. Go down the list and you'll see that weights for bobcat Ono, ringtail Chaos, skunk Gardenia, and wolf-dog hybrid Lincoln are highlighted in yellow. This means "should decrease." Raccoon Emma's weight is highlighted in purple: "should not decrease." A gray highlight indicates "significant change," which of course included the robust wolf pups.

### Cold Weather

Zoo sanctuary animals don't complain about the interminable cold gray, sunless days like all the humans do. However, they do take action. Recently, keeper Amy Van Der Molen spent a lot of time placing straw on the hills and valleys of the black bear exhibits to cut down on mud and improve footing. Apparently, bears Sequoia and Tahoe spent a lot of time gathering up the straw and stuffing it - and a big green donated holiday tree - into one of their dens. The bears squeeze in for naps.

### The Forest Comes to the Zoo

All the animals have green holiday trees, which look good and smell better. Tigers Misty and Pouncer tackled their trees with gusto. The wolves yanked theirs around by the tips. Mountain lions spent a lot of time checking out all the botanical and human smells, making that very cool "cat grimace" - eyes squinted, nose wrinkled, tongue curled and teeth showing - called a Flehmen response.

Everyone at the Zoo Sanctuary, especially the animals, is grateful to Bushnell's Nursery in Roseville for the donation of beautiful, crisp green holiday trees for all the animals to enjoy.



### The Lovely Nematode

It's been muddy work for PBM Construction crews working on the bridge that spans the creek and wetlands that leads to the eventual Wild Canid Exhibits where wolves, coyotes and wolf-dog hybrids will live in big oak shaded meadows. But even with the mud, there are rewards. Like the lovely nematode. The workers discovered this 14-inch long, brownish red, threadlike wormish thing sort of knotted up on the mud near the stream. It was transferred to keeper Amanda Schath with the hope that she knew what it was. She in turn placed it on the desk of zoo superintendent Jocelyn

Smeltzer. "Wow" everyone said. The brownish red wormish things was handed over to zoo sanctuary supervisor Terry Jenkins who immediately identified it as a horsehair worm, (a nematode) because it's long and very thin like a hair from a horse's tail, and it can be found in pastures, etc. Interestingly, it's a parasite and lives inside crickets, which can't make them very happy. And if you accidentally step on a cricket, the long horsehair worm might squirt out, which no doubt saddens both cricket and nematode.