

Spring 2005

Soap Opera

What with spring, life in the Zoo Sanctuary pasture isn't as - um - pastoral as one might think. To the casual observer it looks peaceful enough, but there are deep undercurrents!



Pygmy goats George and Tammy, of course, continue to push and shove when anything remotely edible is available. Ram Dodge herds females Princess and Maggie interminably. And while pig Charlotte is friendly with the Selected Few and Wilber is shy, just last week pig Templeton jumped up and grabbed a keeper by the arm with his damp porcine lips. Aggression? Affection? Hard to tell.

Big white livestock guarding dog Harrison and bigger golden horse Gus have had ongoing issues too. Gus slowly stalks the dog. Harrison barks at Gus. Several weeks ago Harrison and puppy Cheyenne were romping when Gus stationed himself too close to the dogs. Cheyenne's reaction was interesting, she leaned her side against Gus's down-thrust head. Gus, in turn, gently rubbed his head back and forth in what could only be an affectionate gesture. Then Cheyenne moved and started to gently nibble/groom one of Gus's giant back legs. "Right in the kick zone," alarmed observers thought, but all was peaceful!

When ram Dodge or goat George walk too close to deer Jane Doe she produces little stiff-legged boxing motions with her front legs. On the other hand, one sunny morning Jane was in hot pursuit of Harrison, who would stop every twenty-feet or so, spin around and bark. Jane would kick up her heels, and the game would continue.

Naughty and Cranky

Several months ago, there were no lightweights in the raccoon complex. Scout weighed in at 18.2 pounds and Autumn was living in a voluptuous 20.1 pound body. It was time for serious dieting. A zookeeper wrote a note in the daily keeper journal: "Dieting raccoon are naughty and cranky." Obnoxious also comes to mind. The raccoons had ganged up on her looking for more food than their new diets allowed. They burrowed in the



trash bag looking for edible morsels, climbed her leg, and were - cranky.

But, as it is with humans, dieting misery gives way to connoisseur-ship. The most recent note in the journal tells us that Naughty and Cranky currently are well mannered and kind. Autumn and Scout burrow and climb no more. Instead, they sit politely by their bowls, munching on succulent raw broccoli with gentle enthusiasm.

Claudia's Little Bed

Some time ago, a volunteer contacted Caddis Pet Products, a manufacturer of, among other products, the perfect mattress for Rhesus macaque Claudia. The mattress is firm, and just right for Claudia's 39-year-old body. Plus, it comes with removable, washable, faux sheepskin covers. A lot of telephone time was spent discussing mattress dimensions, wash-ability, and other tech stuff. Claudia's photo was emailed to Kathy at Caddis. You've seen lovely Claudia, delicate silver-blue eye shadow, a lightly whiskered muzzle, the upswept hair. The volunteer purchased two mattresses and four covers. Caddis very generously donated six complete sets - mattresses and covers, along with Kathy's gentle email that the zoo's money might better be spent on a new hairsylist for Claudia.



Exotic Treats

Try this at home. To a nice square of fresh, green wheat grass add approximately one tablespoon of live meal worms. Wait until the worms settle down into the grass and serve. Little squirrel monkeys Tumaco, Orinoco, Monita and Maquita, as well as Claudia, can spend a lot of behaviorally enriching time seeking - and eating - the nutritious, delicious mealworms.

Goats

In early March, a herd of fifty goats, plus a few nifty sheep, temporarily went to work at the Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary. Superintendent Jocelyn Smeltzer is enthusiastic about this plan. "Goats are an environmentally friendly way to reduce fire danger in the zoo sanctuary's oak forest canyon expansion area, and this is a significant way we can practice what we teach. One of the great things about goats and sheep is that they eat blackberry bushes, poison oak and thistles in addition to the grass and brush. And they can work on the steep hillsides where humans can't go."



The animals mow, fertilize, mulch, cause minimal noise and air pollution - in addition to providing subtle entertainment for the zoo mountain lions and wolves who find the sounds and smells of a visiting flock of ungulates intriguing. (You've always known that ungulates are hoofed mammals: Artiodactyla are even-toed like pigs, sheep, goats and deer. Perissodactyla are odd-toed like horses and rhinos.)

Moving the Flock

When Natural Solutions delivered the goats and sheep to the zoo, keepers were enlisted to assist the herding

dog in moving the flock to the forest area. The plan was that keepers would run down the road ahead of the animals with a handful of alfalfa. The animals would follow and the dog would pick up any stragglers.

The plan was set in motion. Keepers in the lead, animals following. But wait. Off to the side the goats and sheep spotted - yes! - knee high green grass. And being brainy beasts, they veered into the brush. Apparently noting that plan one was deteriorating, the herding dog decided to take it upon himself and put plan two into action and herded the straggling flock into the fenced park horseshoe pit area, and from there, to the zoo expansion area.

Herps*

You remember all the snakes that star with Indiana Jones? Big ones. Multitudes of small ones? Consider this; snakes never stop growing. So Indiana's great big snakes will be - yes - even bigger. Snakes Cleo and Lucy have grown in the years they've at the zoo sanctuary. Substantially. But, because of species constraints, they will never be monster snakes even when they're really old. (*Herpetology is the study of reptiles and amphibians.)



Solomon's Excellent Tail

On a warm afternoon, prehensile-tailed skink Solomon was sitting on his log on the Zoo Classroom front porch. Keepers and docents were working nearby just to make sure that he didn't travel. There are pipe safety handrails on the porch, tastefully painted to resemble long scaly snakes. And it was

around one of these handrails that Solomon chose to wrap his strong prehensile tail. Better safe than falling off your log.

More Herps

White's tree frogs Sydney and Melbourne continue to thrive on a diet of crickets. They, like all the animals you read about are part of the PAWS, CLAWS, HISSES & HOOVES Adoption Program. Do It!

Right On Target

With the counsel of zookeeper Carole Garrett, the zoo crew is target/clicker training many of the animals. A "target" is something like, say a 3-foot long piece of PVC pipe with caps on either end. The animal is asked to move to the target and touch it with his/her nose. When the nose touches, the keeper clicks (good job!) and there's a food reward.



Black Bear Fisher proved that he is very good at this. Keepers asked him to move into the big plywood weighing board that sits on the scale sensors. Naturally, no thoughtful bear would consider stepping onto something unfamiliar. Not for the offered fruit smoothie. Not even for the banana. Then a keeper got the target and simply said, "Fisher, target," and target he did. Stepped right up on the board, touched his nose and enjoyed his shelled walnut treat. His weight? 545 pounds of fun. Down from a chunky 612lb.

River's Issues

For a long time, black male wolf River has been balky about moving from the exhibit into holding pens for meals. particularly with two keepers. It was recently suggested that he may be reacting to the fact that both staffers pull their hair back in a tight pony tail. So far, if they take off the hair band, River will come in. Are their glances more piercing with hair pulled back? A lupine fashion comment? None of the above? Whatever works!

What's in a Name

No one has a clue why one of the zoo sanctuary domestic rabbits is named Silver Mable. True, as a silky haired rex, she's a fabulous silver color. The Mable part is a mystery. Rabbit Pepper is pretty easy: he's white with gray speckles. They share an exhibit together.



A Moving Experience

Barn Owl Grayson will take up residence in the new custom mews. Constructed by Eagle Scout candidate Parker Kjar with some help from his friends, the building is sited in the quiet shade of the oak forest, a place wild owls would choose for a resting spot.



New Den Space

Mountain Lions Bristlecone, Juniper, Willow, Alder and Ventura have spent some useful months checking on new off-exhibit construction. The back holding pens have been reconfigured for safety. This is where the cats are moved, and locked in, at mealtime so that keepers can clean the outside exhibit space. The new arrangement assures that a keeper and a cat can't be in the same chute at the same time.

The Lesser of two Tribulations

In the past, given the theoretical option of spending time one-on-one with a cougar or gray squirrel Peanut Brittle, most would opt for the cat! Even though we know, philosophically, that No Animal is Mean, everyone who came into personal contact with PB came away in need of band-aids.



Some say that gray squirrel PB has become a new squirrel since spending time in the zoo sanctuary clinic. He was on meds and received lots of hand-on care. Love may indeed conquer all. Senior squirrel Bumpy and Toothless continue their gentle ways.

An Account of his Own

The Behavioral Enrichment fund at the zoo sanctuary is important. It provides money for the extras that make life just a little bit better for the animals. Nearly everything is manufactured by keepers or volunteers, puzzle boxes, pinatas, toys to crawl into or hang from, things that roll, and things that challenge claws and beaks, and more. The Friends donate to the fund, and money earned from the recycle program assures that the program is solvent. Then there's the account specifically for ringtail Chaos, provided by the kids at the Placerville Independent

Learning Center. Their mascot is the ringtail, and lucky Chaos gets lots of goodies like special boxes of sand for digging, colorful hammocks for lounging and ringtail toys. Thanks Placerville Ringtails!



The Fort

The best fort in town belongs to wolf-dog hybrids Lincoln and Wakara. Built by Jeff Banyard (with advice from spouse and zookeeper Kaye) the fort has an upper level with a roof to protect from rain or sun, where brave Lincoln spends a lot of time, and a lower cave level that seems to be exactly right for shy Wakara.

Who'da Thought

Every once in a while zoo cats are provided with a little catnip. Some are fans, some are not. Bobcats Ono, BJ and Aiko are keen on fresh celery leaves! In fact, Aiko was seen recently with head down, rubbing

enthusiastically on a stick of chopped celery tops!

Parrot Facts

The parrot family has more globally threatened species than any other family of birds. With 94 species of parrots currently considered vulnerable, endangered, or critically threatened with extinction. Many subspecies are at risk of disappearing forever. For most, the wild capture for pets is the primary cause for decline.

While parrots are entertaining and beautiful, they also can be destructive, long-lived, difficult pets. The zoo sanctuary's two macaws, blue and gold Bingo and green wing Bill are typical of birds that wore out their welcome at some point. Handsome Bill came to the zoo sanctuary more than 20



years ago, and he and Bingo share their climate and temperature controlled home as companions, and usually friends.

African gray parrot Mesa and cockatoo Pogo are very talented former pets. Both are education birds who spend a lot of time teaching kids and adults the important facts noted above.

Action can make a difference. The Wild Bird Conservation Act changed the United States from the largest importer of wild-caught birds to a non-importer of wild-caught parrots.

Ferrets

Once again, legislation has been introduced to allow ferrets to be owned as pets and imported to California. Assembly Bill 647 allows retail stores to sell ferrets that are spayed or neutered and vaccinated against rabies. Similar legislation has been proposed for many years in this state without passing. Zoo sanctuary ferrets Paulie, Bandit, Jingles and Buddy are kept under a special license, and may have been purchased legally in nearby states where ferrets are sold in pet shops.



It Happens

After cleaning, zookeepers have a mental checklist of things to remove from an exhibit: rake, shovel, trash bags, bucket, hose, etc. Having cleaned the exhibit, the keeper reviewed the list, and as she opened the slide gate to release tigers Misty and Pouncer into the exhibit her mind clicked to "other hose." Too late! Pouncer

was out of the gate and had the hose clutched in teeth and claws in seconds. The keeper called for a bucket of tempting chicken necks, which arrived immediately. Chuck a chicken neck in the pool near Pouncer and her hose, and you get a sneer. Turn the hose on and you get a fountain of water - too much tiger fun! Meanwhile, the keeper is bracing her foot on the exhibit wire and pulling. Pouncer is nonchalantly holding the hose with one claw! Yawn! More chicken necks were thrown in, one on the left, one on the right. The chicken neck on the right was the one. Pouncer's attention lapsed momentarily, just long enough for a mighty yank to get human control of the hose. At hose repair time, the keeper cut out four feet of damaged hose, which Pouncer eyes speculatively!

The Animals are Registered!

The Folsom Zoo Sanctuary has several on-line and in-store registries. You know. Gift ideas for brides. Gift ideas for zoo animals. The usual.

<http://www.homedepot.com> Go to Gift Center. Then, On-line registry. Then Folsom Zoo Sanctuary (in the spot for "last name")

<http://www.target.com> Go to Gift Registries. Then Club Wedd. Then "Friends of" (in the spot for "first name") "Folsom Zoo Sanctuary" (in the spot for "last name")

<http://www.sanctuarysupplies.com> Go to Wish Lists. Then Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary.