



PAW PRINTS

A
Publication
by
Friends
of the
Moonridge
Zoo a non-profit
organization

VOL XXI ISSUE 1

\$1.00 DONATION

SPRING 2009

The Friends of the Moonridge Zoo is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to support the Moonridge Animal Park through (1) educating the public regarding the treatment, protection, and conservation of wildlife, (2) recruiting and coordinating zoo volunteers, and (3) Fundraising.

The Moonridge Animal Park is operated by the Big Bear Recreation and Park District of San Bernardino County. The park is an alpine wildlife sanctuary and rehabilitation center. For those animals that cannot be released, they are provided a "Home for Life" in the park.

Electronic Edition of the Pawprints Newsletter Is Now Available

Starting with the next issue of Pawprints, rather than receiving a printed black and white mailed copy of Pawprints, you have the opportunity to receive a color electronic version instead. All you need to do is go to our web-site and sign up. When the next issue of Pawprints is published, you will receive an email that will link you to the new edition. The newsletter will be in Adobe PDF format. You can open the issue and read it online or save it to your computer and read it at a later time. By receiving an electronic edition of the Pawprints newsletter you will be helping the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo to lower their newsletter production cost.

In addition, we are in the process of making all of the back issues available on our web-site. The Friends of the Moonridge Zoo started publishing the Pawprints Newsletter in 1993. We are planning to have the newsletters indexed so that you can read about topics of interest such as Zoo Staff, Friends of the Moonridge Volunteers, the Animals, and article titles. By the time the next issue of Pawprints is published, we should have the back issues of Pawprints online.

You can help us cut cost by requesting the electronic version of Pawprints. It will be exactly the same as the printed paper copy, but in color instead of just black and white. Visit the website at

<http://moonridgezoo.org/fomz/pawprints.html>

By the way, you can checkout how the electronic edition appears, and see this issue on the internet. It is located at the same place (URL address listed above) where you can click to add your name to the electronic mailing list.

Who, Who am I

by John 3 Hawks

I am a small bird for my species and if I were not injured, I would spend my nights flying and hunting for food because I have very special eyes that make this easy for me. Actually, my head is sort of big for my little body, and it is not unusual for you humans to mistake me for a bat when you get only a glimpse of me as the sun goes down for the night.

You probably know by now that I am an Owl, but I am not just any owl...I am YODA...the one and only pint sized owl to first greet you at the Moonridge Animal Park. I guess this makes me an entertainer of sorts and this is okay with me for sure! (continued on page 2)

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Well, here we are again, on the brink of spring time. We're all ready for some nice weather. This year's winter had some really severe weather.

As always, it is time to start planning our spring and summer time events. We have a couple of new folks leading us in some of these areas and I'd like to say welcome and thanks to them. A schedule of those events is published in this issue. Please check it out and for you do-ers and volunteers out there, please let us know if you'd like to be involved in any of these. We'd love to have your help!

Bill Treadwell will update you on the details of the progression of our zoo relocation later in this issue. We're still plugging away and progress has been made, if not as quickly as we might wish.

The animals are enjoying the change of seasons too and are much more active than they are in winter so I encourage you all to come visit us soon!

Hope to see you at the Zoo!

Betsy Henke



What an Owl from page 1...

You have classifications for us birds and I am known among your species as the Saw-Whet owl. How did I get this title? Well, by all means...let me explain! When you humans sharpen saws you refer to it as 'whetting the saw' and of course as you do this a sound is made with your tools that sounds kind of like 'ksiew'....okay...use your imagination here and you will get the idea of how I 'talk'.

Yes, my size may be small but I do great things to keep our earth in balance. Most of you don't like mice and other small rodents so my job is to use them as food and save you the problem. Like me, you too may see yourself as small in this world but as my life will show, you can also do great things in the area of protecting this one and only earth we all share. Here, size does not matter but our combined actions will speak loudly if we all just do our part.

That I can fly in the darkest of times and not bump into things is a reminder to you humans that figurative dark times may enter your path, but you can still get many things accomplished in a good way. As you know, Owls can see very well at night and this too teaches you that when these 'dark' times come it would be good to examine the situation with clarity and the problem just may not be as big as you think.



I can turn my head almost all the way to my back so I am always aware of what is going on around me, and this is good to keep in mind when you are driving, hiking, working or just relaxing for the day. There are times to be alert, and times to be aware of nature, and all she has to teach you. Take time to listen to the animals, birds, and bugs...they have much to say and much to share with you. When we fly, our feathers are designed to be totally silent as we work and is a good reminder that one does not have to brag about everything, but rather we can go about our work in quiet appreciation. So that's me! Yoda!! Yeperdoodle!

Come visit me please and, well, hmmm...how did your old Hollywood movies say it..."Look into my eyes"..... and we will have some real fun!!

Your special friend, Yoda!

Our List of Special Events for this Coming 2009 Season

For more details about the events please go to

<http://moonridgezoo.org/map/programsevents.html>



MOONRIDGE ANIMAL PARK

— BIG BEAR'S ZOO —

2009 SPECIAL EVENTS

MAY 16	Photography Contest
MAY 24	Bear Country Fair
JUNE 20	Sentinel Day
JULY 4-5	Zoocasion
AUG 8	Music in the Zoo
AUG 22-23	Native American Arts Festival
SEPT 5	Ice Cream Safari
SEPT THRU OCT	Flashlight Safari Saturday nights
SEPT 19	Run for the Grizzlies
OCT 17	Wolf Awareness
OCT 31	"Boo!" in the Zoo

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RELOCATING THE MOONRIDGE ANIMAL PARK

By Bill Treadwell

As the Moonridge Animal Park approaches its 50th year anniversary of providing medical attention to alpine wildlife in the San Bernardino Mountains, we look back at the Moonridge Animal Park with great pride in the achievements: helping over 8,000 alpine animals return to their natural environment, while providing a home for life to those who cannot recover from their injuries.

The park has overgrown its very outdated site facilities and needs to relocate. The Moonridge Animal Park is working with the National Forest Service to move onto forest service land. Our current park is squeezed between a ski resort, golf course and residential

housing. The relocated park will be surrounded by national forest—a very natural setting for our animals to live in and where you and other visitors can come to enjoy and be informed about the interrelationship of nature, animals and humanity.

The move will require building a new park from the ground up. The park will be built with an eye on using alternative and renewable resources using 21st century technology along with water and waste recycling systems. In particular, our wildlife animal hospital will be a green building and be LEED certified.

Currently the National Forest Service is conducting their final review of the Environment Impact Study. Paul Bennett, Big Bear Recreation Forest Ranger, said that possibly in 60-90 days the report will be published. That would imply that in May 2009, the

National Forest Service will be deciding whether or not to go forward with a Special Use Permit. That Special Use Permit will be the green light for saying we have land to build a park on!

Given the Special Use Permit is granted, we will then need to turn the master plan into construction documents and then begin building the park.

Given the current circumstances, the earliest ground breaking would be July 2009.

Meanwhile, if you'd like, you can read the public responses to the Draft Environmental Impact Study on the internet at <http://moonridgezoo/lfwc/futurevision.html>

We are making progress, albeit slowly.

The Science of Yoda

By Bill Young

Have you ever seen an owl that is no bigger than a Pepsi can? Most people never get a chance to see this little Saw-Whet owl (*Aegolius Acadicus*) out-side of captivity, but we've got one and his name is Yoda. The Saw-Whet is the smallest of the 19 different owl species in North America.

Saw-Whet is a strange name, but the people who gave this little owl it's common name thought that it's song sounded like a saw blade being sharpened. The only time these owls make sound is during the mating season ... otherwise, they are completely silent. During mating season the little male owl also sends out an endless series of low whistled toots, about two per second. If you hear this call at night in the forest, the little owl could be as far away as 300 yards. You may actually see this owl flying at night, but you might think it's a bat since there are lots of bats around. Few people are lucky enough to actually spot the Saw-whet in the wild.

If you happen to see the little owl in the daytime, be cautious not to draw too much attention to it's position. You may give away its location to crows or other birds that would harass it. Remember, nocturnal birds are resting during the day.

This little owl lives in the Pine forests throughout California and the northern parts of the U.S. Their primary diet is mice and other small rodents. These little owls have excellent black and white vision since they hunt at night and color vision isn't necessary. It is even thought that these little hunters can also see in the ultra-violet (UV) part of the spectrum. Have you ever seen how your white t-shirt glows under a black light (UV)? Well, the underside of the Saw-Whet's wings glow in the ultra-violet

range too. This makes it easier for Saw-Whets to spot each other when they're hunting in the forest at night.

Yoda, as with all owls, can turn his head almost completely around. Know why? Think about your own eyes for just a minute ... if you hold your head still, you can still shift your eyes left and right and up and down to see things. Now imagine that your eyeballs were so big that they couldn't move around in the eye socket ... you'd have to turn your whole head in order to see anything that wasn't right in front of you, right? Well, that's the situation that all owls find themselves in too. So, to give them the ability to spot mates and food and enemies, owls can turn their heads almost completely around without moving their lower body. Owls can turn their heads that far because nature has provided them with nearly twice as many cervical vertebrae as we have. Actually, they can't turn their heads completely around ... just 270 degrees or about 3/4 of the way around.



YODA

You might ask: if the Saw-Whet owl preys at night, then he must sleep during the day, right? Right! Then why is Yoda awake when I see him his enclosure? Good question. Yoda is at Moonridge Animal Park because a large part of his wing is gone ... he can't hunt or fly for himself anymore. We feed him during the day and this is changing his natural habit of hunting/feeding at night. You might have seen Yoda's meal laying on a branch next to him ... it was probably a mouse. Normally in the wild, Saw-Whets will catch a mouse and consume the front part of their prey first, then carry the back half of the meal back to their nest. If the meal should freeze in the winter, the little owl will lower itself down on the frozen meal and thaw it with their body heat before dining.

Is this owl Shy? Debbie Richardson, the zoo's curator, said that Yoda, as with all raptors, doesn't like eye contact when

they're eating. In fact, Yoda will sometimes try to cover the meal with his wing if someone is watching him eat. Only when the keeper looks away for longer than a few seconds will Yoda start feeding. The little owl thinks that the viewer is trying to snatch his food away ... and they guard their catch with fury.

How do we know if Yoda is a male or female? There are clinical ways of "sexing" the little owls, including a blood test and genetic analysis, but this is fairly costly and somewhat traumatic to the bird. Generally, the males are 10% smaller, and weigh up to 30% less than the female.

Yoda's formal name is The Northern Saw-Whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*). Typically these little owls are 6-8" tall, and weigh a whopping 3-4 ounces. To give you a comparison in weight, a whole banana weights nearly twice as much as this little owl!! Furthermore, Yoda and a cell phone weight about the same!

Saw-whets begin nesting in April. The female will takeover a woodpecker's hole or other natural nest-like structures including man-made nesting boxes. The female will lay 4-6 eggs, with each egg being about the size of a jellybean.

Her mate feeds her during egg-laying, incubation, and brooding, often storing numerous extra prey items around the nest.



The eggs are laid over a period of several days so that when they hatch about 26 days later, the chick's ages will be staggered. Since the chicks grow so quickly, by staggering the hatching day, the mother gives all of her attention to the newly hatched (continued on page 5)

Meet Barbara Jordan, A member of the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo Board of Directors

by Bill Young

Barbara Jordan was born and raised in Long Beach, California. In 1966 she moved to Redlands, California where she and her husband raised their four children, Tony, Syd, Jaimi and Stacie. In 1977, after a divorce, Barbara went to work in the criminal justice field. In 1983, she married Donald W. Jordan, a criminal defense attorney. Barbara and Don now reside in Sugarloaf, California



next door to Big Bear City. Their marriage brought three step-children into Barbara's life, Ken, Kate and Dan. Barbara and Don now have seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Barbara joined our Board of Directors in 2008.

From 1979 until 1994, Barbara worked as a mitigation expert on death penalty cases. Her work kept her in the courtroom and in prisons working with defendants facing the death penalty. In 1994, after having worked on 42 death penalty cases, Barbara decided that it was time to retire from

her work with death penalty defendants. Her passion for the outdoors led her to pursue a career as a nature photographer.

Barbara began studying photography through the University of California at Santa Cruz and the New York Institute of Photography. She also studied through workshops with some of the country's leading photographers. After attending a Death Valley workshop with black and white photographers Rod Dresser and Richard Newman, Barbara became fascinated with black and white photography and darkroom work. She immediately built a darkroom in her home. In 1996, Barbara's first limited edition Black and White series was printed.

Barbara now photographs in both color and black and white.

Barbara is now exhibiting in juried art shows as well as in The Gallery in The Village in Big Bear Lake. Barbara is currently working on Photo Impressionism utilizing the native flowers and landscapes near her mountain home. She is also photographing wildlife native to her Southern California Mountains. Barbara is also donating her time and photo prints to fundraising efforts of the Moonridge Animal Park--home to many rescued wild animals, including grizzlies and black bear, wolves, mountain lions, bobcats, bald eagles and many more.

In September of 1996, Barbara's web page took form. In January of 1998, Shutterbug Magazine featured Barbara's website in an article about photographers on the internet. Although the web site is a photography site, Barbara has attempted to put emphasis on the environment and endangered species. Barbara has a special desire to educate children about the environment by developing their interest in the animals and their habitat needs. She has been very encouraged about the interest in her website and photography shown by the many visitors who have emailed her. She hopes that her photography will have an effect on others to be touched by the beauty of nature.

For more detailed information on Barbara's extensive experience and background, you can visit to her website at: <http://www.silvercloud.net>

Science of Yoda from page 4

chick, then the next day moves on to the next new chick in the clutch. The little owlets will be completely feathered (fledged) at about 30 days. After fledging, young birds tend to remain together.

The father, and sometimes the mother too, continue to feed the young for at least a month after they leave the nest. Unlike many other owl species, Northern Saw-whet Owls are capable of self-powered flight immediately upon fledging.



An interview with the Lead Keeper at The Moonridge Animal Park

by Bill Young

Christy McGiveron is one of the best kept secrets at the Moonridge Animal Park, also known as Big Bear's Zoo. My recent interview with Christy uncovered facts that few visitors to Big Bear's Zoo ever knew about.

For example, when Hucklebeary came to our zoo in 2002, he should have weighed 50 pounds, but he weighed only 15 pounds, and he had a crushed right front leg. Hucklebeary was an angry little bear when Christy (and her family) decided to take him into their home. Christy had to bottle-feed Huck with big thick welding gloves, because he just wasn't used to human touch. Christy knew that "Huck" was a black bear, but he acted more like a Tasmanian Devil when he'd go running and screaming through the house chasing everyone and everything.

She also told me the story from 17 years ago, where one of the coyotes did not like her. She had always loved the animals, but had not yet learned each critter's characteristics. Apparently the other keeper would take the coyote on walks inside the zoo. The coyote loved to come out of the enclosure, but didn't want to go back into the enclosure. It turns out that Christy was the "bait" that lured the coyote back into the enclosure. There was a front door and a back door to the enclosure. So they would open the front door, Christy would run thru the enclosure, the coyote would chase her in, and then Christy would fly out the back door. Most of the time it worked, except when Christy would trip over the ledge... "I could feel hot coyote-breath and that scared me pretty badly."

At various times throughout the last 19 years, Christy has home-raised several deer, coyotes, wolves, owls, and many raccoons... plus not forgetting Christy's three children, Austin, Skylar, and Autumn, too! Christy told

me about one year when Skylar was a baby (he's now 10 years old), she had him in a backpack baby carrier while working inside the Eagle flight or the bear enclosure... she'd have to go feed and change the baby boy then come back into the Eagle flight much to the delight of the visitors. Sometimes she would find Skylar in the playpen with



a baby ferret or some other little creature... needless to say, Skylar has been raised around his Mom's critters since birth, and he shares her passion for the zoo's creatures as well.

And the newest addition to Christy and Tim's family is Autumn, now 3 years old. They thought that Autumn would be THE animal-lover, but she has yet to develop that love.

Christy started working with animals as a young girl at home in Alpine, California. That's when her parents would find a stray dog or some other creature locked in the garage for safe keeping. As a teenager, she worked for Public Wild Life in

San Diego, California as well as the San Diego Humane Society's adoption unit. Christy started training as a vet, but quickly discovered that seeing blood all day was not her cup of tea... instead, she learned the "hands on" techniques of developing a personal relationship with the animals... that's where she "needed" to be.

While she was working in her parent's Video store, a customer who worked at the San Diego Zoo was moving to Big Bear to become the zoo's Curator. He knew of Christy's passion for animals, so when Christy told him that she would clean cages, shovel food, etc. to work in the Big Bear Zoo, he said OK. There were only two animal keepers and a curator back then, so there was much work to be done.

That was in 1991, and she's been here since then... Well, she did take a couple of years off for her newest baby daughter but she's back now. And even after 18 years of watching the park's creatures come and go, she's just as enthusiastic today as she was then. "Where else can you be paid to be next to a bear all day? Where else can you walk down the path and have wolves greet you with a special howl? These animals are spectacular!" Well, we all think that Christy McGiveron is pretty spectacular too!

The Moonridge Animal Park is Open Year 'Round, (Weather Permitting) with Daily Noon Animal Presentations

Summer hours: Memorial Weekend (May) thru Labor Day Weekend (September) 10:00am—5:00pm with Daily Animal Feeding Tours 3:00pm (excluding Wednesday).

Winter hours: 10:00am—4:00pm Animal Feeding Tours only on Saturday & Sunday 3:00pm

Admission prices: Ages 11-59 \$9; 3-10 \$6; Seniors \$6 and children under 3 free.

Tour Groups available call 909 866-9700 for details.

Meiko's Fun Stuff!



Word Search

B M T E H A R L E Y
 Z L O B A C R D A L
 O N A P C G K O T L
 O O Z C A N L C C D
 C X Y O K T O E A R
 A F E U G B H N S Q
 M G O G R S E T P B
 P T R A R K J A E L
 R T U R T L E X R H
 N O B E A V E R M L

Words to find:

Black bear Turtle Eagle
 Cougar Casper Zoocamp
 Docent Harley Beaver

Chipper is a grey squirrel.

She has 4 acorns hidden-how many more does she need to make a total of 12?

Do YOU know?? Which is the largest animal at our zoo? (hint...his name is Norman)

Circle the words that are spelled correctly:

Opossum Beaver
 Coyote Snakic
 Ravum Red Fox

WHO AM I?

I am a large bird that flies mostly during the night times. My wings are made so there is almost no sound when I fly and I have very large eyes. My ability to hear is very good and can often hear a mouse up to a half mile away. Whooooo am I?



Howdy!!

I am Wally the Frog and my home is in the water. I am not a toad who prefers the land but can live both above the water and in the water!

I am here to ask you to please be sure and not put your trash in our rivers, lakes or oceans. We all need clean water... so be smart.....do your part and keep our waters clean!

Meiko says....you are like our earth...one of a kind and very special!

**Yes! I'm wild about the
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Visit Us on the Web

Discover More

Before your next visit to the Moonridge Animal Park, browse our website at <http://www.moonridgezoo.org>

Learn what's new at the park and when the next Special Event is scheduled. You can read about some of the animals and find out why they are with us.

Also background information of the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo can be reviewed, and you can read details regarding the relocation efforts to move the park.

Membership

Has your membership lapsed or have would you like to join as a new member?

You can renew or become a new member online at <http://moonridgezoo.org/fomz/join.html> or call 909 878-4200

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Publisher.....Big Bear Printing

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