



PAW PRINTS

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

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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) fund-raising.

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

MAMA TUTU - Animal of the Year

by Betsy Henke and Debbie Richardson

The Friends of the Moonridge Zoo has named Tutu, the grizzly bear our first annual **Animal of the Year**. We chose Tutu, also known affectionately as Mama, because she is very special. Tutu and her two cubs, Ayla and Harley, came to the Moonridge Zoo in 1996. Tutu had gotten herself into a lot of trouble at Yellowstone National Park. She was deemed a "3 Strikes" bear by the park rangers. Tutu had developed some bad habits, such as raiding campsites, breaking into bakeries and bluff charging people, that were not acceptable to the humans in the park, so she and her cubs had to go.



With amazing support from the community and others, their new home had been put together. Upon arrival the 3 bears had a great time running about and investigating their new dens. The second day after their arrival the keepers

Fortunately for Tutu and her cubs and for us, we heard about them. The 3 bears were sent to the Woodland Park Zoo in Washington while we built them a new home. When it was time to bring the bears to Big Bear, Don Richardson, Debbie Richardson and Christy McGiveron went to pick them up. Tutu was very reluctant to get into her crate because she didn't want to be separated from her babies. In fact, she had to be tranquilized in order to get her to go. Her son, Harley, was equally distressed at being separated from his mother and howled continuously. But after an uneventful flight on a commercial airline back to Ontario, the bears were met by Park & Rec staff with 3 flat bed trucks and were driven up the mountain stopping only for a few water "breaks."

released them into their outside enclosure and Tutu, Ayla and Harley took to it right away.

Tutu is quite small for a grizzly bear. It is thought that due to a fire in Yellowstone when she was very young she might have been separated from her mother and therefore she had difficulty finding food. This would explain her small size and her past "unacceptable" behavior. She might have felt desperate for food and discovered how easy it was to steal it from humans.



MAMA TUTU

In spite of this, Tutu is a wonderful mother. Each year she has tried to dig a den for her family. The first few years the staff felt

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Spring is my favorite time of year anywhere but especially up here in Big Bear. I think we can (finally) safely say that we're done with snow and count on beautiful sunny days and starry nights.

Of course, spring is the season of renewal and rebirth and we at the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo have a lot to celebrate this spring as the Environmental Study of our new location is just about to go out for public review! We are one step closer to beginning to build the new park.

Since January, a group of Friends and community members has been meeting as a steering committee to plan for the future of education at the Moonridge Animal Park and at our new facility. From this group, we've created new and exciting programs for docent training, intern training and public education. We are now in the process of training a new group of adult docents and in the process of training 4 new docent interns as well.

We are gearing up for our busy time of year. We have a full calendar of events for this summer and committees for these events have already begun to meet. Look for a list of these events in this issue.

Be sure to come up to see us this summer, the animals and staff will be very happy to see you!

Betsy Henke



2008 ZOO WINTER GAMES Squirrel Stuffing Event

by Diane Roberts

It was a very busy and fun winter for all of our animals at the Moonridge Animal Park! They have been training all year to "compete" in their individual winter events and boy, do we have some really talented boys and girls!

Willy, our loveable gray squirrel, competes with the best by trying to stuff the most Christmas tree branches, bison fur and keeper's hair (ouch!!) in his teeny tiny nest box! And do you blame him? He wants to keep toasty and warm in his little house during those cold winter days in Big Bear. He stops at nothing to attain his lofty goal! His training is intense and those patrons and staff who have witnessed Willy's talents are absolutely amazed and enthralled by the speed and method with which he stuffs the bison fur and keeper's hair into his very tiny mouth!

It is a total riot to watch Mr. Willy literally spring into action when we enter his enclosure! Before you know it, Willy is on your shoulders furiously plucking away at the hair on your head (in keeper-Josh's case, it is the hair on his chinny chin-chin!) and then his paws are working like mad to stuff those prized clumps of hair into in his mouth and then he is off to the "finish line" with incredible speed! Oh my, what extraordinary talents this boy has and there is much cheering and giggling from the crowd watching him! And ... oh yes ...after he has stuffed a ton of bison fur, in particular, into his mouth, a bunch of it is hanging out...resembling a beard ... and, in our curator-Debbie's words "he looks just like Abe Lincoln!". Willy is most definitely our champion in many ways, indeed!

Friends of the Moonridge Zoo

42001 Big Bear Blvd., Suite 3
Big Bear Lake, CA 92315 • 909-878-4200

Mailing Address:

PO Box 2557 • Big Bear City, CA 92314

Hours:

Office Open Tuesday - Saturday
10 am - 6 pm

EASTER AT THE ZOO

by Diane Roberts

On Easter Sunday, patrons were greeted in the Education Center with special holiday signs and an Easter basket. Two special Big Bear friends of our zoo, Erin and Alyson Brandes, delivered a delightfully decorated egg carton filled with brightly colored Easter eggs, especially for our raccoons. The girls drew pretty spring flowers, hearts, bunnies, and Easter eggs all over the carton with special sayings "Moonridge Zoo, We Love You!" and "Happy Easter, Raccoons"!

Also, Claude, one of our local Big Bear friends of our zoo, brought by some fresh "Easter" fish that he caught at the lake that morning. What a fun and generous gift for our beautiful bears! I wish Claude had been there to see Harley chowing down on his most special "Easter" fish during the feeding tour! And, our friends, Erin and Alyson, would have loved watching Rocky and Zeus eating their beautifully decorated Easter eggs on the feeding tour as well. Our Easter Enrichment Day began at 12:45 p.m. on Easter Sunday and it was quite "egg" citing when the specially decorated "Easter Wagon Express" made its way through the zoo carrying all the neat treats for our awesome animals. It was so much fun to see our patrons, staff, and especially our animals so "egg" cited!

A long line of joyful and giggling patrons followed the "Easter Wagon Express" to each enclosure to watch our animals enjoying all their special Easter gifts! Our striped skunks totally loved their Easter buckets filled with Easter mealworms and purple and pink and green Easter eggs. And our sweet Cinnamon the serval, and our mischievous Miranda the gray red fox, really enjoyed their Easter bags filled with all sorts of yummy Easter goodies. The feisty fox boys, Pippin and Fire, really got down with their Easter treats and Aslan, our always entertaining Canadian lynx, wowed the crowd by tossing his Listerine scented Easter bag filled with a catnip-and-bison-fur-covered-drumstick all over his enclosure. And Lotus Blossom, our beautiful badger, was literally jumping with joy when she spied all of us coming up the path. She could hardly contain herself and greeted me at her gate with lots of fun noises. She totally loved her purple bucket and bag and from the very beginning got right into the holiday spirit by "hopping" all around with her fun treats just like the Easter bunny! Wow ... what SPECIAL WONDER indeed and a most "EGG" CITING Easter Day at our zoo!



WINTER GAMES

Lynx Event

by Diane Roberts

Aslan, our VERY handsome Canadian lynx, is a natural at winter sports! His super duper special skill at tossing the snowball is a TOTAL BALL to watch! First, he lays down in the snow and holds the snowball in his GIGANTIC front paws and pumps it with his HUGE back paws, repeating this motion several times over. He then leaps off the ground with superlative skill and, at the very same time, he tosses the snowball high into the air! All you see is a blur of beautiful fur with humongous paws tossing and batting and throwing that snowball all over his enclosure with great strength and mighty speed! Aslan is our Olympian champ...for sure!



(continued from page 1)

that for safety's sake the den should be destroyed but eventually Tutu was allowed to have her den. She lines it with pine needles to make it comfy and when the time comes for a winter's sleep, she and Ayla go deep inside while Harley takes up the rear. Unfortunately for Harley he can't quite fit his large Grizzly Bear posterior all the way in but he seems to have made the best of it.

Tutu has always been very protective of her cubs. She was not fond of men and would bluff charge any men who came near the enclosure. Still, to this day, she always lets her cubs eat first, only taking food after they have chosen theirs. Mama Tutu, who is now approximately 23 years old, has had amazing patience with her young. After all, in the wild, she would have severed ties with them when they were 2-3 years old, but Ayla and Harley are now about 14 years old. She has been known to climb trees, which is unusual behavior for a grizzly bear. The keepers think she did that in order to get a break from the cubs. One time, at a media event introducing the grizzly bears, Tutu chose to climb approximately 30 feet up a tree just as a docent was explaining to the media that *grizzly bears do not climb trees*

Tutu is indeed a very special bear and certainly deserves the honor of being our Animal of the Year!

GIRL SCOUTS FROM LONG BEACH

Troops #123 & #363

by Diane Roberts

GIRL SCOUTS FROM LONG BEACH...SWEET! On Sunday, April 27th, two very lovely and lively girl scout troops (#123 and #363) from Long Beach arrived with great zeal at our zoo. It was a most memorable moment as each girl filed in carrying a generous gift for our gorgeous animals! Their glowing faces and grandiose smiles were bigger than a full moon shining over our beautiful Big Bear! Len and Kitty Backus and Diane were there to welcome these gracious girls to our park. We gathered at our picnic table area, where each girl placed their gift on one of the tables and, in no time at all, the table was laden with very special gifts for our animals! Truly a treasure trove of precious presents from our Zoo Wish List: jars of honey and molasses, tons of freezer storage bags, cans of evaporated milk, two 40# bags of rolled oats, mealworms, knuckle bones, decorative river rock, heating pad, electric hair clipper, fish food and more! Then...their leader, Kim Schneider, stepped up and very proudly presented us with cash and gift cards for Von's, Stater Bros. and Petco TOTALING \$400.00! WOW...what a moving moment indeed! We were all overwhelmed with emotion and beyond grateful to these very giving and generous girl scouts. Then, if all those glorious gifts were not enough, there was MORE! The girls had gathered together at their Monday night meeting prior to their visit and handmade 160 pineapple ball treats for our beautiful black bears, grizzly bears and raccoons. And, they colored and decorated four dozen hardboiled eggs for our foxes, skunks, raccoons and coatimundis. The Girl Scout spirit was most definitely alive at our zoo this day!

These energetic girls then helped Diane with the special treats for the scheduled Sunday enrichment events. At first, when they were asked who wanted to place those icky wiggly mealworms into the coatimundis' purple gift boxes, no one volunteered! But, soon the girls were actually begging to join in on this jovial wiggly worm fun! One of the girls was so enthusiastic about her very own wonderful worm, she was teased and told by her parent to not even think about taking her worm home with her as a pet! Tee hee! The girls also had a ton of fun decorating two gift bags for our red fox, Miranda, our Serval Cinnamon, and a special bag for Aslan our loveable lynx. Then the girls followed me up the path to see their enrichment treats "in action", and boy did they have a ball...the girls AND the animals!

Then finally, the finale...the Feeding Tour! The girls excitedly joined Chelaine, one of our newest keepers extraordinaire, and Diane at the grizzly enclosure. What a total treat it was for the girls to see our gorgeous grizzlies partaking of those tasty pineapple ball treats that the girls personally prepared for them! A special thank you was given to the girls as they all delightedly watched Harley, Ayla, and Mama Tutu quickly devour the delicious delicacies. They absolutely loved watching Mr. Handsome Harley Bear (the super showman, for sure!) performing his captivating coconut caper...charming everyone in sight as he enjoying every single second of it! What wonderful whimsy! And our rambunctious raccoons particularly enjoyed their brightly colored eggs the girls brought for them. It made their day!



The girls, all 25 of them, were eager and enthusiastic about getting started with their tour of our zoo to finally see all of our amazing animals. Following their special tour, the girls gathered together on the benches at the upper lawn area for the noon animal presentation given by Diane and Miss Shirley, our special one year old "Awesome Opossum" and John 3 Hawks. What a fun and delightful learning experience for all the girls and the rest of the zoo visitors! Lots of great questions and observations from the girls and the other visitors were generated by John's very special life lessons on the opossum! A gift to all of us...for sure!

As this dream day ended, all of us would know that each girl made a difference in the lives of our beautiful animals! What a grand and groovy day it was for EVERYONE! The frosting on the cake came days later when we received a very touching email from Kim, the Girl Scout's leader, which read, "We loved the day and all the animals. It was obvious that the animals are so well cared for and loved. I have told everyone I have come across the past few days about your zoo and have expressed that you guys need support. We are very grateful to you and all you did. The sign (a special welcome sign posted in the Ed Center) was such an added touch that made us tear up. The girls loved everything about the day. I have even heard a couple of the girls talking about "awesome opossums"! It was truly an honor to have these very special girls at our zoo!

Long Live the Girls Scouts from Long Beach!



FAMOUS, FEISTY FOX DUO

by Diane Roberts

Old Man

*Today you have gone home
Real freedom now lifts your wings
No longer earth bound
You soar to a new spirit lodge*

*Your earthen path is complete
Enter this place with honor
And should you look back
You will see us still loving you*

*As a great teacher
You have touched many
As a great brother
You have touched us all*

*Yes, we miss your presence
An emptiness is felt
Yet we cherish your gift
Of sharing your life*

*Your life lessons we will pass on
And others will see
That limits to one's body
Does not limit one's spirit*

*Great wisdom you still hold
Sacred medicine lines your heart
Touch us with your spirit gifts
So we can pass them to others*

*Enjoy your new freedom our brother
Always we carry you within
And as you taught us to soar
So may your spirit*

*In beauty you have touched this
earth
Our heart
Our life
Our soul*

*Welcome home.....
Your sisters and brothers*

By John 3 Hawks

Our famous devious feisty red fox duo, Pippin and Fire, have a brand new enclosure. It is quite a fine cage, built by our very cool county maintenance crew, and it is located right in front of Windsong and Scar's (our special "Senior" red foxes) enclosure. Their nifty new domicile has been appropriately decorated with lots of love and fun stuff and our two bandito boys seem to be adjusting quite well to their groovy new abode.

I personally refer to this daring duo as the "Bandito Boys" because their total mission in life is much mischief and begging, borrowing, and stealing all of the food they can get their paws and muzzles on! And I do not exaggerate here! They LOOK so cute and sweet and innocent, but looks are most definitely



deceiving when it comes to these two scamps! They are cunning con artists and they truly are living proof of the long held and popular saying "sly as a fox"! They stop at nothing to achieve their goals. No shame here, for sure! And they use all their saucy, tricky, crafty, foxy charms to get what they want!

Come by soon and see Pippin and Fire in their fun new home and they will soooooo quickly draw you in with their wily ways! You will, for certain, have a case of constant giggles and grins during and after your visit with these very shrewd fox boys!

PENNY'S FIRST BIRTHDAY

by Diane Roberts

HAPPY FIRST BIRTHDAY!

Our sweet, petite and playful Penny, our baby gray fox, who came to us via The Living Desert after being found orphaned and alone by the side of the road in Palm Desert, turned ONE YEAR OLD in March! And, the keepers had a most grand and groovy birthday bash for OUR PRECIOUS PENNY! The fun and fancy affair was hosted by her keeper-mommy, Jenna, one of our very special keepers who raised Penny, and Staci, another of our very special keepers! The beautiful birthday girl-fox greeted everyone with her sweet smiles under swaying palm trees, coconuts, pineapples, and a lovely Hawaiian leis. What?! Yes, you heard it right, and on our very own Baldwin lake too. Penny "told" her keepers that she wanted a Hawaiian luau for her 1st birthday party after a long snowy winter ... and her birthday wishes came true! I'm sure Penny thought that this was the best birthday party ever.



Join Friends of the Moonridge Zoo!

(a non-profit organization)

Members of the "Friends" are scattered across the U.S. from California to Maryland to (2) members in the United Kingdom!

See benefit packages under box at right.

Check appropriate box

Individual Membership\$30.00

Couple.....45.00

Family Membership65.00

in Family _____ (immediate household family members - 2 adults & 3 children under 18. Each additional child add \$3.00 to pass price)

Contributing Membership \$150.00

Sustaining Membership \$500.00

Keepers' Circle \$1000.00

Curator's Circle \$5000.00 - One Time

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FRIENDS OF THE MOONRIDGE ZOO (FOMZ)

Mail to: Membership

P.O. Box 2557, Big Bear City, CA 92314

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Editor Bill Young

Contributors: Bill Treadwell, Bill Young, John 3 Hawks,
Brett Craxton, Diane Roberts, Betsy Henke

Graphic Design/Layout Joan Robb

..... 928-717-6006

MOONRIDGE ANIMAL PARK

Curator: 909-584-1299

Open Year 'Round

Park Hours September-May

Monday-Friday 10:00AM-4:00PM

Saturday-Sunday 10:00AM-5:00PM

Animal Presentations at Noon

Group Tours 909/866-9700

Monday-Friday 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Admission General (Ages 11-59)\$7

Seniors (Ages 60 plus)\$5

Children (Ages 3-10)\$5

Children under age 3 free

MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATIONS, DUES & PRIVILEGES

BASIC MEMBER BENEFITS

- Free admission to the Big Bear Zoo for one year
- Free or reduced entry to reciprocal zoos
- Subscription to Paw Prints, FOMZ newsletter
- 10% discount in gift shop
- Free or reduced entry to zoo special events
- Docent training

MEMBER CATEGORIES AND BENEFITS

INDIVIDUAL – \$30 per year, one person –
Basic member benefits

COUPLE – \$45 per year, 2 adults –
Basic member benefits

FAMILY – \$65 per year, 2 adults, 3 children
(under age 18, immediate household) - additional children
\$3 per child per year – *Basic member benefits PLUS*

- Four (4) free one-day guest passes

CONTRIBUTING – \$150 per year –
Basic member benefits PLUS

- Free admission to Zoo for family members
- Two (2) additional guests each visit
- 10 free one-day guest passes
- Animal Adoption of your choice

SUSTAINING – \$500 per year –
Basic member benefits PLUS

- Free admission to Zoo for family members
- Two additional guests each visit
- 12 free one-day guest passes
- Animal Adoption of your choice
- Paving Stone with family name in a new specially designated area

KEEPERS' CIRCLE – \$1,000 per year –
Basic member benefits PLUS

- Free admission to the Zoo for family members
- Two (2) additional guests each visit
- 15 free one-day guest passes
- Animal Adoption of your choice
- Paving Stone with family name in a new specially designated area
- "Behind the Scenes" Tour of the Zoo

CURATOR'S CIRCLE – \$5,000 – ONE TIME –
Basic member benefits PLUS

- Lifetime free admission to the Zoo for family
- Four (4) additional friends each visit
- Unlimited one-day guest passes
- Animal Adoption of your choice
- Paving Stone with family name in designated area
- 20% discount in the gift shop
- Annual behind-the-scenes Tour of Zoo
- Annual Dinner Party with Zoo Curator
- Lifetime plaque on Curator's Circle Recognition Wall



MORE OLYMPIAN GAMES

Coconut Throwing

by Diane Roberts

And, then there is our BEAUTIFUL BIG HARLEY! He is the Coconut Champion of the World and of the Winter Games. indeed! His focus is AMAZING and he trains and trains all summer long for the Zoo Winter Games. He totally LOVES this special event and he has extraordinary skills! Now mind you, it is a bit different in the snow to display his Coconut throwing talents, but he adjusts to this in astounding ways! His concentration and motivation are an inspiration to all and this is most definitely how he has gotten where he is today ... no doubt about it! He is the SUPREME COCONUT CONQUEROR indeed! The excitement builds as we watch Mr. Harley prepare for his match. He takes his beloved coconut ever so adeptly in his powerful paws and then immediately sits down in the snow ... making sure he has the correct stance and also making certain that the coconut is positioned JUST RIGHT in his paws and then, in a monumental motion, he throws it into the air with great grace! A study in PERFECT concentration indeed! You can even hear the audible gasp of the crowd each time Mr. Harley performs his impressive and remarkable craft.

Now, here is where the difficult part comes into play. It is next to impossible to break a coconut in the snow, as our Harley well knows! His coconut just plops into the soft snow each time he throws it. But, being the very smart and determined Big Boy Bear he is, he keeps at it and finally he throws it hard and far enough to hit it against a bare spot of the pool wall and the coconut breaks apart! The roar from the crowd is deafening and they are cheering loudly for Magnificent Harley and his beloved coconut. He now gets to reap the rewards of his tasty coconut AND becomes the Coconut Champ in his victory, and wins the Gold Coconut Medal in the Winter Games! What an awesome achievement and we are so very proud of our genius grizzly, Harley Bear!

Make sure to come to the zoo during the wonderful winter months and you, too, will reap the rewards of our talented and gifted animals! Come one, come all to the Winter Games at the zoo and join in on these very special and exciting days with our beautiful animals and you, too, will come away a winner!

Notice

All donor bricks and paving stones will be moved to the new zoo where they will be replanted. We will be transitioning sometime in the near future to donor recognition trees (where the brass leaves will be engraved with the donor names/recognition.) Leaf pricing remains to be determined.

The purchase of bricks and paving stones has been discontinued.

Grinny, Grin, Grin

by Diane Roberts

And speaking of GRINS ... our VERY sweet and special raccoon, Meiko, is the Grand Prince of Great Grins ... guaranteed! He was positively giddy one day during this past Christmas holiday when I presented him and his rowdy roommates with special groovy gift bags filled with all sorts of goodies, including their ever favorite mealworms! Meiko looked at his gorgeous gifts and then looked up at me with a twinkle in his eyes and the most Grandiose and Grateful Grin in the history of the world ... as if he were loudly exclaiming WOW ... I just LOVE Enrichment Days at the ZOO! It was a classic Kodak moment and a most magical moment for our sweet Meiko indeed!

More fun moments for Meiko and his raccoon gang happened recently when I placed a bowl of water filled with savory shrimp in front of them. Their adept and animated little paws went into immediate action and they seized their prized booty and it was all over in a Moonridge minute.

ROCK ON ... OUR BELOVED COMICAL RACCOONS!



VISIT US ON THE WEB

Before your next visit to the Zoo why not spend a few minutes browsing our website www.moonridgezoo.org?

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

Looking for a way to help the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo or want to join the Friends yourself? You'll find out right here. There is even a wish list where Don Richardson, our Curator, has listed some of the special needs he has for providing the best possible environment for our animals.

**Yes! I'm wild about the
MOONRIDGE ANIMAL PARK**

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Signature: _____

Supporting the Moonridge Animal Park

The Friends of the Moonridge Zoo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public benefit corporation organized to support the Moonridge Animal Park, which is a San Bernardino County Facility of the Big Bear Park and Recreation District.

The Friends of the Moonridge Zoo's (FOMZ) current mission statement is to support the Moonridge Animal Park through: (1) Educating the public regarding treatment, protection, and conservation of wildlife; (2) Recruiting and coordinating zoo volunteers; and (3) Fundraising.

As part of our support program to the park, we annually sponsor special events in the park during May through October of each year—yes, those warmer mountain months. Check our website for the current event calendar.

Have you ever thought about becoming a member of the Friends of the Moonridge Zoo, and help support the unique wildlife animal park? Depending on your level of membership you and your guests can get into the park for free. There are other member benefits too. For more details please visit our website at moonridge-zoo.org/fomz/join.html or call our offices 909-878-4200.

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Return Service Requested

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FRIENDS OF THE MOONRIDGE ZOO



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