



City of Folsom Newsletter

Published 10 times a year for the residents and businesses of Folsom

February 2006

'Click!' 'Click!'

Folsom zookeepers use simple clickers, gentle feedback to train animals

Click!" Autumn, an 8-year-old raccoon at the Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary, scampers to a large, flat rock in her cage and waits expectantly. Zookeeper Carole Garrett tosses a pinch of ground meat and exclaims "good girl!"

"Click!"

Cagemate Scout follows, perching on her own rock. She, too, gets a snack.

"Click! Click!" Another treat for Scout, as Autumn waits quietly on her rock.

The raccoons are responding to the sounds of clicks – which Garrett makes with a hand-held metal clicker – as if taking part in a choreographed dance. And in a way, they are.

The raccoons, like many other animals at the Folsom Zoo, have been "clicker trained." Through patient coaxing, using clicks coupled with rewards to reinforce their positive actions, the animals have learned behaviors that make it easier for zoo staff to care for them.

Clicker training is becoming increasingly popular for animals because it is gentle and positive. The American Zoo and Aquarium Association is proposing to make the system mandatory for its members.

"The changes that have been made in the lives of

See **Clickers**, page 5



Zookeeper Carole Garrett feeds Autumn, left, and Scout.

What's Happening

- ◆ Sign your kids up now for **special weeklong camps** during spring break, April 10-14. Themes range from sports to the arts. 355-7285.
- ◆ Would you or your group like to **sing "The Star-Spangled Banner"** at a City Council meeting? Singing is *a cappella*. Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Call Elaine Andersen at 351-3315.

Inside

- ◆ One hundred fifty years ago, Folsom was a muddy gold camp with something special: a railroad. See page 3 for a celebration story.



Bridge opening delayed to December '08

City of Folsom, Corps of Engineers both committed to trying to finish it earlier

Projections now have the new bridge at Folsom Dam opening a year later than originally planned. Despite that unwelcome news, officials at both the City of Folsom and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers say they are hopeful they can shorten that timeline. The Corps of Engineers is the lead agency responsible for building the bridge.

"We committed back in early December that we are doing everything we can to work the schedule on a more optimistic basis," says Keith Montag, the corps' project manager for the Folsom bridge project. "If there is any opportunity to take advantage of time savings along the way, then we're going to do so."

From the city, Traffic Engineer Mark Rackovan characterized the year's delay as "a worst-case scenario."

The expected opening date of December 2007 was extended to December 2008 after the Corps of Engineers altered its plans to modify the dam for flood

control. The new plan, which would add a spillway controlled by an earthen berm, will require a shift in the proposed alignment of the bridge access road.

The spillway is expected to cost about a third of the price of enlarging and adding outlets to the dam.

Regardless of the finish date, the corps and the city are continuing to move forward on the project. The preliminary design for the bridge should be completed by the end of February, Montag says. URS Corporation and CH2MHill are jointly designing it.

An environmental report is due to be completed in March. The public will be able to review and comment on it.

Montag's commitment to completing this bridge as early as possible is more than professional. He lives in Orangevale and made frequent use of the now-closed Folsom Dam Road. "It's a personal quest of mine," he says. "I'm a local, and I'm going to use this bridge."



'Light rail' oak trees being planted

About 650 valley oaks are being added to Folsom's landscape as a result of an agreement between the city and Regional Transit. RT is providing the trees to replace 170 trees that were removed along Folsom Boulevard to make room for light rail.

The trees are being planted along trails and in Landscape and Lighting areas. Two-hundred trees have been

placed at Blue Ravine Road across from Folsom Middle School and another 100 were planted on the Willow Springs bike trail. Trees also have been planted at Prewett Park and along the Humbug and Willow Creek trails. More will go to Broadstone and Folsom High School and along Oak Avenue Parkway.

RT will take care of maintaining the trees for two years.

Council elects new mayor and vice mayor for 2006

At its Dec. 13 meeting, the City Council elected Andy Morin mayor of Folsom and Kerri Howell vice mayor. They will serve one-year terms.

Morin, a 17-year resident of Folsom, has been a council member for three years. He was vice mayor in 2005.

Morin represents Folsom on the El Dorado County/Folsom Joint Powers Authority, Sacramento Transportation Authority and Sacramento Cable Commission.

Howell has lived in Folsom for 20 years and has served on the council seven years. She was vice mayor in 2002.

Howell represents the council on the Sacramento Groundwater Authority, Sacramento-El Dorado County

Rail JPA and Regional Sanitation District board.

Both Morin and Howell are former Folsom planning commissioners.

The City Council has determined several priorities for the coming year, including supporting the construction of a new bridge at Folsom Dam; funding a study to determine the revitalization needs of the Historic District; starting construction on a parking structure in what will be the Railroad Block; monitoring the efforts to expand cargo service to Mather Field; and continuing to work with residents to plan for the future annexation area south of Highway 50.

City manager steps down

Martha Clark Lofgren, Folsom's city manager since 2000, announced at the Jan. 11 City Council meeting that she would leave her position this spring. "This is a good time for me to make the transition back to the private sector," Lofgren, who is an attorney, told the council. "The city is in great shape."

Lofgren joined the city in 1994 as Folsom's first full-time city attorney. Her tenure as city manager was marked by several important achievements: start of construction of a city library, funding for a new bridge near Folsom Dam, light rail service, an affordable housing policy, a seniors and arts center, a sports complex and future teen center.

Arts grants go to nine groups

The City of Folsom and the Folsom Arts and Cultural Commission announce the recipients of their 2006 cultural arts grants. They are: Folsom Music Boosters for the Folsom Fall Festival; Folsom Patrons of the Arts for a photo contest; Folsom Lake Symphony Orchestra for the 2005 winter concert; St. John Notre Dame School for its spring musical; and Sutter Middle School for its ceramics program.

Four mini-grants were

awarded to three schools: Sandra Gallardo for a video program; Natoma Station for art for reading; Empire Oaks for its Shakespeare Academy; and Sutter Middle for Art for Everybody.

FACC opens new arts campaign

The Folsom Arts and Cultural Commission has rolled out its new "Take pART in the ARTs" campaign to set up an endowment for arts and cultural services in Folsom.

The fund will support renovation work and programs at the new Seniors and Arts Center.

You can help build this endowment by adding a donation to your utility bill or simply rounding up your bill each month.

Multicultural events at library

The Folsom Library will hold three multicultural storytimes in February to celebrate Black History Month. The series features tales from around the world. Folsom High School senior Sarah Howell is presenting the program as her senior project.

The dates and topics are: Feb. 8 – Hero Tales; Feb. 15 – Nature Stories; and Feb. 22 – Tales of Tricksters and Magic.

All programs include music, storytellers and a craft. They begin at 6:30 p.m.

For more information, call 355-7374.



Folsom's colorful railroad past will be commemorated at a 19th-century-style celebration on Feb. 17.

Ride the 'CelebraTRAIN' back to Folsom's Gold Rush years

Many Gold Rush camps disappeared when their gold was gone, but Negro Bar survived to become the town of Folsom. The reason wasn't the gold, which panned out quickly. It was the railroad.

The city's founder, Joseph Folsom, planned the town as a railroad terminus before there were railroads in California. Though he didn't live to see it, his dream came true on Feb. 22, 1856, when the first train on the first railroad in the West arrived in Folsom from Sacramento.

Hundreds of revelers turned out that night for a celebration ball that lasted to sunrise.

What more fitting way to mark the 150th anniversary of that first train's arrival – and the founding of Folsom – than with another evening of dining and dancing, Gold Rush-style?

"Commemorative CelebraTRAIN" will honor Folsom's history on Feb. 17 from 6 to 11 p.m. at the Community Center with a tin-plate dinner, period music and dancing. (The miners served bear steak on their tin plates. This year's menu will be chicken or tri-tip on plates from Marie Callender's.)

Two groups, the Amazing Harmonatras and the Boondockers, will perform the music – some of it on homemade instruments.

To enrich the evening's ambience, the 21st-century revelers are invited to wear 19th-century costumes or clothing from any other Folsom era.

Tickets are \$25, or \$200 for a reserved table for eight. You can request both at 355-7285. The deadline is Feb. 10. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Use caution at light rail tracks

Some motorists are still confused about traffic rules at light rail crossings. City Traffic Engineer Mark Rackovan offers these reminders:

- If the red lights are flashing, stop before the first, or "limit," line of the crosswalk. No part of your vehicle may be on the crosswalk.
- Never stop on the tracks. If you must stop after crossing the tracks, make sure your vehicle completely clears them.
- Watch for "no right

turn" lights on Folsom Boulevard. They activate both when a train is approaching and when a pedestrian is in the crosswalk. You may not turn right while the light is activated.

- If you're turning right onto northbound Folsom Boulevard, stop first before the crosswalk, then proceed when it is safe.
- Watch out for vehicles that stop at all tracks. These include public and school buses.
- *Never* race a train through an intersection.



One of the Folsom community's prized assets is its 22 miles of bike and walking trails. On many of these trails, wood bridges cross creeks and wetlands. Nine of these bridges, totaling 722 feet in length, were built in the past four years by volunteers. This dedicated group of people, who work on weekends, has improved our trails system and saved the city thousands of dollars, says Senior Trails Planner Jim Konopka. He salutes the following core group of volunteers: Tony Powers, Dave Cassel, Dan Winkelman, Wayne Larson, Joe Luchi, Jim Kirstein, Dick Marasso, James Simmons, Rob Johnson, Roland Wooster, Wai Chong and Mike Bell. The city's assistant park planner for trails, Derik Perez, coordinates each bridge-building day and works along with the volunteers.

City water metering begins

Jan. 1 marked two changes in water billing for Folsom residents. As of that date, residents in Folsom's Ashland area, north of the river, are being charged metered rates for the first time. And customers still on a flat rate saw their bills increase to cover the rising costs of treating and distributing the water and to meet new state regulations.

The City Council approved the new rates in December.

The metered residents pay \$17.54 a month for a baseline usage allotment of 20 ccf of water and a commodity or usage charge of 46 cents for each ccf over that. That charge is expected to increase next year to 88 cents.

One ccf is 100 cubic feet of water, or 748 gallons. In Folsom, an average household uses 25 to 30 ccf a month, says Utilities Department Director Ken Payne. About 4 ccf of that is consumed in the home.

The baseline usage allotment the city established falls slightly short of the amount of water the average household uses because, says Payne, "we want people to conserve." Most cities, he says, do not offer a baseline usage allotment.

Residents still being billed a flat rate now pay \$25 a month for their water, up from \$19. The \$25 flat rate is equivalent in cost to a metered rate usage of approximately 29 ccf of water.

The City of Folsom is required to begin metering all residents' water by 2013. However, Payne says, "the intent is to have meters installed well before that." The Utilities Department is preparing a meter implementation plan to specify how and when the rest of the city will be metered. That plan should be completed in about a year.

Before metering begins for the remaining portions of the city, residents will receive several comparison bills showing what their charges would be at the metered rate. This gives users an opportunity to employ conservation measures, Payne says.

"Meters are fair," he says. "People who use less save money and people who use more pay more."

◆ **The city's Utilities Department will conduct a free water use analysis at your home and give you tips on how to save water. Call 355-7252 for an appointment. The city also staffs a water information line 24 hours a day at 351-3408.**

Clickers (from page 1)

animals with this kind of training are so amazing," Garrett says. "It's easier and safer for the zookeepers and easier and safer for the animals."

The system is based entirely on positive reinforcement, without the use of punishment or leashes.

The premise is that animals can learn ways of behaving and will repeat actions that bring rewards. This holds whether the animals are tame or wild, whether they are mammals, fish, birds or reptiles.

Yes, even fish can be clicker trained, Garrett says.

The trainers reward the animals in successive increments, reacting positively each time an animal gets another step closer to the goal behavior.

The system was first used with dolphins, who can't be restrained or punished – they'll just swim away. But they do learn to perform desired behaviors for rewards.

That the system works doesn't surprise Garrett. Animals can remember, she says. "Responding to rewards is what animals do in the wild every time they successfully catch prey. When a raccoon turns over a stone and finds a worm or a crayfish, she's

going to go back and do it again."

Once trained, animals will perform the desired behavior in response to the clicks, and they will continue the behavior even when occasional clicks don't yield a reward. The responses are similar to the way Pavlov's famous dogs anticipated being fed at the sound of bells.

Clicker commands work better than voice commands for training because clicks are a distinct sound and they can be made more quickly than words can be spoken, Garrett says. Thus, the association is clear.

About half the animals at the Folsom Zoo have been clicker trained so far, some of them by other zookeepers whom Garrett has trained.

Clicker training is used for much more than feeding. Garrett has trained zoo animals to cooperate appropriately when staff needs to examine their teeth, give them shots, draw blood, weigh them or move them into cages to be taken to the veterinarian. In that case, the animals learn to walk into the cage without being leashed or prodded.

A few years ago, the zoo's most famous bear, Fisher, created highly coveted original paintings. He, too,

Coach teaches 'Smooth' basketball

Most of the time, basketball training at the Folsom Sports Complex is serious business. But every now and then, when Sterling Forbes is coaching, the lessons lighten up.

"Smooth" Forbes, as he was known in his playing days, is the man to introduce levity onto the court. He is a former member of the Harlem Globetrotters, the team that has won fame and fans worldwide for making basketball fun.

Forbes is the basketball director at the sports complex. He coaches boys and girls from age 5 through high school and does personal basketball training. Under him, the basketball program includes leagues for youths and adults, lessons, summer camps and after-school programs.

Occasionally, as a break from teaching the serious basketball fundamentals, Forbes will show the kids some of the Globetrotters' tricks.

Forbes played forward for the Globe-

trotters for nine years and still does advance publicity for them. It was a great professional career, he says. "I've got a lifetime of stories."

Not only do Globetrotters have to be good players, but they are goodwill ambassadors, too. Forbes traveled to 63 countries with the team and met kings, queens and presidents. No matter the politics or the language, fans lined up for the games, and they always left with smiles on their faces, he says.

Forbes, a Folsom resident who has coached at the sports complex since it opened, is looking forward to working for the City of Folsom when it takes ownership in February. The plans to expand the complex, including a teen center and preschool, are "awesome," he says.

The Folsom Sports Complex, at 66 Clarksville Road, also offers indoor volleyball and soccer, baseball, softball, batting cages and dance programs. For



Sterling "Smooth" Forbes twirls a basketball, Harlem Globetrotter-style. The former Globetrotter coaches boys and girls basketball at the Folsom Sports Complex.

Special Events

Through Feb. 26 – **Trains & Township: Past & Present.**

Exhibit on West's oldest railroad and Folsom's lively railroad past through arrival of light rail. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. Folsom History Museum. Small admission. 985-2707.

Through April 14 – **AARP Tax Assistance.** Trained volunteers prepare, electronically file your federal, state taxes. Thursdays and Fridays at the Folsom Library. Free. Appointments required: 355-7374.

Feb. 3-5 – **Quilting a Bridge to the Past.** Annual Folsom quilt show. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fashion shows 2 p.m. Community Center.

Feb. 3 – **Tales and Trails of Nancy Kelsey.** History Museum's Gaynel Wald portrays first woman to cross overland to California. Also slide show "Life in India Today." Senior First Friday. 10 a.m. Folsom Library. Free. 355-7475.

Feb. 4 – **Free Museum Day.** Folsom History Museum and 21 others in the area offer free admission 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Feb. 14 – **Valentine's Night Out.** Sponsored by Aquatic Center and Zoo. Movies, pizza, flashlight tour of zoo. 6-10 p.m. Community Center. \$30. 355-7285.



Gaynel Wald portrays a plucky pioneer woman at the Folsom Library on Feb. 3. Her reenactment is part of Senior First Friday.

Feb. 16 – **Magic of Timothy James.** Humorous magic. Sponsored by Target. 7 p.m. Community Center. \$7 person/\$24 family in advance; \$8 and \$28 at door. 355-7285.

Feb. 17 – **Commemorative CelebraTRAIN.** Celebrate Folsom's 150th anniversary. 6-11 p.m. Community Center. See story page 3.

Feb. 25 – **Folsom Lake Symphony Winter Concert.** Peter and the Wolf, Bolero. 8 p.m. Folsom High theater. Ticket information: folsom-symphony.com or 983-4277.

Coming Up

Through July– **Floods & Flows: 50 Years at Folsom Dam.** History of Folsom water issues and influence of the dams. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. History Museum. 985-2707.

March 10-12 – **Friends of the Library Book Sale.** Friday preview 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$5. Saturday, Sunday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free. **New location:** Folsom Sports Complex.

March 12 – **Women in History.** History Museum series. Theme: Women of Wartime. 2-4 p.m. Community Center. \$20 adults, \$15 members, \$10 children. 985-2707.

Feb. 17 – **Public Safety Citizens Academy Signup Deadline.** 10-week course introduces residents to the services of our public safety agencies. Held Wednesdays from 6 to 8 p.m. beginning March 1. Topics include CSI, EMS, identity theft, SWAT, narcotics, 9-1-1 reporting, disaster preparedness, code enforcement, animal control, traffic safety. Course is required for public safety volunteers. Classes are free, but you must register in advance. Call 355-7367.

Meetings

City Council meets 6:30 p.m. the second and fourth Tuesdays, City Hall.

Planning Commission meets 6:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays, City Hall.

Parks and Recreation Commission meets 6:30 p.m. the first Tuesday, City Hall.

Library Commission meets 6:30 p.m. the first Monday, Library.

Architectural Review Commission meets 7:30 a.m. the second and fourth Thursdays, City Hall.

Historic District Commission meets 5 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays, City Hall.

Traffic Safety Committee meets 4 p.m. the fourth Thursday, City Hall.

Murer House Foundation meets 6 p.m. the third Tuesday, Murer House classroom.

Redevelopment Advisory Committee meets 4 p.m. the last Thursday, City Hall.

Landscaping/Lighting Districts meets 7 p.m. the third Thursday, City Hall.

Arts and Cultural Commission meets 6:30 p.m. the second Thursday, City Hall.

Utility Commission meets 6:30 p.m. the third Tuesday. Location varies.



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