Living the good life

Many people find the serenity of the Mother Lode’s foothills a great place to retire; they come here to revel in milder winters and warm summertime sun. Almost a decade ago, some super-sized creatures came to call these foothills home, too; the elephants in the care of the Performing Animal Welfare Society.

To their credit, PAWS’ co-executive directors, Pat Derby and Ed Stewart, shop locally. Tons of food for their elephants and tigers – currently the only two species relaxing on the hillsides – are purchased or contributed from area suppliers and local builders are hired for new construction.

The sanctuary also attracts visitors from around the world to San Andreas. Tours provide intimate glimpses into what it takes to safely and honorably keep these unusual critters in captivity, bringing hundreds to town. Many of those visitors stay in area bed and breakfasts and Ed and Pat are the first to recommend Gold Country wines to their visitors.

For me – a youngster who grew up on these hillsides – spying pachyderms perusing the pastures of their paddocks is a thrilling sight; who’d have thought it? And if you get the chance to meet Ed and Pat, you’ll find their dedication to the animals amazing; would you spend the night on concrete with a newly arrived elephant that’s none too sure of what just happened? I can assure you that in no time, those new arrivals merrily make it onto Mother Lode soil and revel in its wonders.

May we all be able to enjoy our retirement in such loving care.

Mike Taylor
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Welcome to Sierra Lodestar

April 21 - 27, 2010      Vol. 2 No. 8

8 AMADOR IN ACTION
9 SLUICE BOX
10 TUOLUMNE TALK
13 WINE LISTINGS
14 NATURE CALLS
16 MINING THE PAST
17 SOLID GOLD FISHING
18 PLAYING WITH YOUR FOOD
18 LIGHT ON THE PATH
20 LIFE’S LITTLE NUGGETS
21 VOLCANO THEATRE REVIEW
22 HAPPENINGS

On The Cover

Mara, an African elephant, strikes a dramatic pose at ARK 2000, a sprawling sanctuary operated by the Performing Animal Welfare Society in San Andreas.

Photo by Mike Taylor

Mother’s Day Brunch

Sunday, May 9, 2010

Celebrate your mother with an elegant brunch in Ironstone Vineyards Music Room.

Seating Times:
9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

The costs are $39.00 for adults
$8.00 for ages 8-12 &
$10.00 for 7 years & under

Please make your reservations,
call 209-728-1251 ext.11

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Submissions

Sierra Lodestar accepts unsolicited manuscripts and photographs which, at the discretion of the editor, may be used in the magazine. No compensation is offered nor should it be expected except as expressed in writing by the editor. We welcome submissions about people and places in the region, particularly stories about its history, places to visit, sights to see and things to do. All published submissions become the property of Sierra Lodestar. Every effort is made to assure that calendar listings and events are accurately described; however, readers are always encouraged to contact event organizers directly to verify that changes have not occurred after the magazine has gone to print. Please submit editorial contributions, calendar items, press releases and other information to Mike Taylor at mtaylor@sierralodestar.com. Copyright Calaveras First Co. Inc. 2009/2010. All rights reserved.