

ACCESS ADVENTURE/Anywhere Wild! Magical May 2009

Dear Friends,

Fanny's Foal

The Magic began on April 17, when Fanny (Stonewall Fantasia) quietly delivered in her stall a magnificent colt sired by the Royal Knight Friesian stallion, Apollo. The little fellow instantly became a testament to the quality of the breeding we are achieving by joining the Stonewall and Friesian bloodlines. Attached is a picture taken within hours after his birth. At his first public debut at the Rush Ranch Open House his many admirers were stunned by his beauty. In the paddock adjacent to Fanny and Fandango, Apollo had his own show going on, as he pranced around the enclosure. Surely he must have been aware of his new-born son next door and was displaying pride in his first California born foal. Or, he wanted to interest Fanny in a date to discuss their next foal!

Fanny and William

William Stewart, a youth intern who joined Access Adventure when he was attending Amijo High School and now attends Golden Hills School in Fairfield, has been involved in Fanny's training since the beginning. He waited for the phone call from the "baby watch" volunteers in Vacaville to hear that Fanny was about to deliver. She fooled everyone by picking her own time and place, obviously confident that she could do the job without help. At the Open House William and volunteer Jim Carr began to work with Fandango introducing him to the halter and the concept of being led. Fanny watched everything and periodically stepped in to remind us that as his mother, she is still in charge. Her every action shows that she will be a wonderful mother. As the colt lay down for a rest, William lay down beside him, making that magical connection between horse and human.

Golden Hills School (post-secondary education for young people with special needs)

Participants in our Golden Hills School program fill a number of equestrian positions usually performed by able-bodied individuals. Golden Hills School students and their teachers, Judy Waelbrock and Wendy Williams, attend class with Access Adventure mentors, Cathy O'Shea and Abigail Stockinger, every Thursday. The students are learning to groom, tack, train, ride and drive the Access Adventure horses. They gain experience in all aspects of horsemanship and horse care, and are trained to perform tasks at equestrian competitions, public community events and programs serving others with disabilities. Performing these tasks builds self-esteem, a sense of responsibility, team work, communication and essential job skills.

The Golden Hills Program is an example of Equine Facilitated Learning, an educational approach that includes equine facilitated activities incorporating the experience of equine/human interaction in an environment of learning or self discovery. Equine Facilitated Learning encourages personal explorations of feelings and behaviors to help promote human growth and development. Each student from Golden Hills has challenges, but their progress toward their goals has been inspiring.

Bay Area Outreach Recreation Program www.borp.org

Bay Area Outreach Recreation Program (BORP) has been an important partner to Access Adventure. Outings Director, Lori Gray, brought her group out to Rush Ranch in 2006, and has served as an advisor since then. Her presentation on Disability Awareness to a small group of Access Adventure volunteers in 2006 is in video format and is used in our volunteer training program. BORP had its first visit for 2009

in April and were at the ranch after Fanny and her colt had taken up temporary residence. They will be back in May to see them again.

The BORP Adventures and Outings Program provides disabled children, adults, and families with access to the many wonderful outdoor and urban attractions that the Bay Area has to offer, in a supportive and integrated environment. Participants get out into nature, explore their communities, get fresh air and exercise, and try new activities that they never thought were possible for themselves. BORP offers weekly urban outings such as theater trips, museum tours, and art festivals as well as more adventurous outdoor excursions including guided walks and nature hikes on local blind and accessible trails, adaptive skiing trips, kayaking, rafting, and whale watching.

Access Adventure has been invited by BORP to attend a camping trip at Del Valle, an East Bay Regional Park near Livermore. The park district is focusing on making their parks accessible, not only by having a special ADA campground at Del Valle, but also by providing tents, cots, sand-friendly wheelchairs to cross the beach, accessible toilets and showers and amenities not always available to wheelchair users at campgrounds. We are currently in the planning stages for this event but with Lori's help and that of the park district we are confident that we will be able to attend. See the park district website for more information <http://www.ebparks.org/parks/accessibility>

A SPECIAL THANK YOU!

We have just completed a very busy April! Starting with the Wildflower Wingding, then the John Muir Birthday – Earthday Celebration, and ending with the Rush Ranch Open House, our volunteers have been heavily involved in the planning, and put in many hours of work at the events. They deserve not only congratulations for work well done, but our thank you for putting their own lives aside for a while in order to make it possible for Access Adventure to attend the events. Nothing that happens in Access Adventure could be done without them! To the horses, Rock from Simpson Percherons, Access Adventure's Reba and Ruby, Stuart Schoeder's Betsy, Lloyd Stueve's Barnie, Penny, Peggy and Danni, Susan Hassett's Sadie and Blue, we are deeply indebted and hope that our good care is payment enough for their services.

The John Muir Birthday – Earthday

The John Muir Birthday – Earthday at the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez was a resounding success. The John Muir Association and the National Park Service always put on a great event, and did so again this year. The dignitaries were brought to the site on the Access Adventure Thornlea carriage, powered by the magnificent Rock, owned by Simpson Percherons. Rock always makes a huge impression on visitors, as he towers over them at 19.1 hands. Thank you to Danielle Simpson for once again making Rock available to be a part of this event.

2360 visitors enjoyed the activities and exhibits, live entertainment, self-guided tours of the historic Muir Home and the California Native Plant Garden. Columnist Gary Bogue, Pet and Wildlife Columnist, was the featured speaker. John Muir, as portrayed by National Park Service ranger Frank Helling, celebrated his birthday (and cake) with visitors. It was a beautiful day in Martinez.

Rush Ranch Open House

Under the auspices of the Rush Ranch Educational Council, Rush Ranch Docents provide scheduled programs for groups visiting the ranch. These have included bird and plant walks and slide shows on

Rush Ranch wildflowers and ranch history tours. Docents also provide an educational program for school classes on Tuesday mornings in the spring and fall that was designed on grades 3 and 4 curriculums.

The 19th Annual Rush Ranch Open House, a fundraiser for the Rush Ranch Education Council, was held on a beautiful spring day. It was a celebration of Nature, art, music, dancing and traditional crafts. Displays and demonstrations of square dancing, weaving, spinning and carving, guided nature and birding walks, local Native American culture, horse shoeing and blacksmith, falconry and farm animals kept adults and children entranced. A 1900's hay wagon restored by RREC volunteer Virgil Sellers and his crew, and powered by Lloyd Stueve's team of four black Percherons, a carriage driven by Susan Hassett, and the Access Adventure wheelchair accessible trolley were busy all day transporting visitors to the historical displays on the trail and beautiful views. In the barn, Rock greeted his fans and welcomed gentle pats from admirers. Out in the paddocks Apollo reigned over his family, in a way only Friesians can, head up watching, or down to look at you with his gentle eyes.

Drive the Rails with ACCESS ADVENTURE

Grayson Sorrels has planned an incredible Anywhere Wild! adventure on the Bizz Johnson Trail in Lassen County. Grayson is responsible for our previous trips to the Humbug Valley, and has scouted this Rails-to-Trails route and Forest Service Campsites for our band of intrepid travelers. The trip will begin with a stop at the Ronald McDonald Camp at Eagle Lake where we will drive the horses for the campers. For more information, a description of our "Drive the Rails" is attached.

"Celebrate Adventure!" the Walk with Rock and Horse Fair

Access Adventure needs your help! In order to continue serving our community and accomplishing our mission to provide recreational and educational programs for people with mobility challenges and underserved youth, we need a steady funding stream. We depend on our annual "Celebrate Adventure" events to pay for horse feed, transportation, and program costs.

On Saturday, October 10, 2009, we will "Celebrate Adventure" with a major fundraising Walkathon and Horse Fair at the Access Adventure headquarters, the Solano Land Trust's Rush Ranch near Suisun City. The gentle giant Rock, the largest Percheron draft horse in North America, will lead the 2.5 mile walk. The venue is the historic 2070 acre ranch located within the largest estuarine marsh in North America. The scenery, the antique farm equipment, the recently dedicated Nature Center and Native American displays are only surpassed by the opportunities for bird watching. All combine to make the 2.5 miles a pleasant hike. The walkathon will be followed by a fun-filled afternoon at the Horse Fair. Lunch, auction tables, entertainment and exhibitions including draft horse, mule and oxen hitches, wagon rides, traditional horse farming, antique carriages, and demonstrations of various equestrian disciplines will enhance the celebration.

Access Adventure is seeking corporate sponsorship to underwrite this annual event, as well as teams of participants to join the 2.5 mile walk. Your support will establish your company's reputation as committed to caring for the needs of the disabled and our many youth programs. Last year's walkathon at Lynch Canyon was well received and we expect an even larger turnout at the Rush Ranch. Sponsors will be prominently listed on all promotional materials. As an individual, you too, can help. Plan to attend the walkathon, ask your friends to sponsor you, win an award for having the largest team, or collecting the most sponsors. Donations from individuals unable to attend are welcome.

SAVE THE DATES!

ACCESS ADVENTURE/Anywhere Wild! Events

Access Adventure Sonoma, Laguna de Santa Rosa, Saturday, May 2
Memories of Muir Scouting Trip, Ft. Hunter-Liggett, Los Padres, Monday-Tuesday, May 4-5
Dixon May Fair, Program for Special Needs Kids, Dixon, May 8
Vineyard CDE, Woodland, Saturday-Sunday, May 16-17
Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center, Orinda, Volunteer Training, Sunday, May 17
Access Adventure Sonoma, Plow & Play Day, Jack London State Park, Sunday, May 17
Picnic, Rio Vista, Sunday, May 24
Rock'NHorse Ranch, Grass Valley, Monday, May 25
Russ Ranch, Winters, May 28 (postponed)
Heritage Days, Borges Ranch, Walnut Creek, Saturday, June 13
Driving the Rails, Lassen County, June 17-21
Redwood Rendezvous, Humboldt County, July 22-26
Memories of Muir, September 13-19
"Celebrate Adventure!" the Walk with Rock, & Horse Fair, Rush Ranch, October 10

Rush Ranch

Access Adventure "Get Dirty Work Day, Saturday, May 2, June 6
"Golden Hills Youth Group, Thursday, May 7, 14, 21, 28, June 11, 18, 25
Access Adventure Volunteer Training, Saturday, May 9, June 13
Bay Area Outreach Recreation Program (BORP), Thursday, May 14
4-H, Carriage Rides, Blacksmithing Demonstrations, Saturday, May 16, June 20
"Alive", Futures Explored, Thursday, May 22
Access Adventure Monthly Staff Meeting, Saturday, May 23, June 27
Paradise Valley Estates, Thursday, May 28
4-H Graduation, Saturday, June 27

Lynch Canyon

Lynch Canyon Anniversary Weekend, driving, Saturday, May 9

Michael Muir and the Volunteers of ACCESS ADVENTURE

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Attachments: Birth Announcement, Drive the Rails flyer, Bizz Johnson Trail brochure, WWR 2009 flyer,