



Wildwood owner Bonnie Ringo with cat splash pool (Photo by Steve Fairchild)

New digs make splash for exotic cats

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before being placed are returned to Wildwood.

Like most businesses in the valley, Wildwood was hurt financially by the Biscuit Fire last year.

Bonnie hopes business will pick up this year and she is determined to put Wildwood on the map as a tourist destination.

The Ringos don't make much money from public tours. In fact, last year they barely made enough to cover their liability insurance, Bonnie said.

"In Cave Junction we are blessed to have one of the rarest tiger exhibits in our own backyard," she said. "With a little help from the public (volunteers) this can be a beautiful show place."

Each of the animals at Wildwood is treated like a

family pet. Bonnie walked around petting the cats and gently talking to them to make them feel comfortable.

It took more than a week to move all the cats into their new homes. While they were in the middle of the move the Ringos were preoccupied with other problems — a baby cat that they had placed came back to them with a sickness that took extra time to treat.

It's just another typical day at Wildwood where the animals require 200 pounds of meat per day.

This summer Wildwood will add a "splash with the tigers" show in which the Ringo's daughter, Abijah, 19, will swim with tigers in a 45-by-25 foot concrete pool complete with a tall waterfall to act as a backdrop.

The pool has been in place for two years, but this will be the first year for the show.

Abijah said that she is not afraid to swim with the cats since she has been swimming and interacting with them since she was a young girl.

The Ringo's other daughter, Anna, 18, also helps take care of the animals.

The swimming show is the closest the Ringos come to using animals in a "show."

Bonnie is passionate about making sure the cats are treated naturally and made to feel comfortable in their home.

"These animals were not meant to jump through hoops on command or perform at the end of a whip," she said. "We don't believe in hauling them around to perform in circus acts to please the public, but rather we allow them to exhibit natural behavior suitable for their species."

"Tigers love to swim," she added of the swimming with tigers show. "They love to play ball; this is natural behavior."

Now that the new enclosures are in place, the Ringos can focus on even bigger expansion ideas.

Plans for Wildwood include bringing in a sea lion exhibit and a shark tank with glassed-bottom bumper boats.

The pool would include non-threatening species of sharks in a 30-by-40 foot pool 12 to 15 feet deep. The idea for the shark tank came from an exhibit in Long Beach, Calif. and would add to the educational interaction of the park, Bonnie said.

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A little common sense, goodwill, and a tiny dose of unselfishness could make this goodly Earth into an Earthly paradise.

- Richard Aldington -

Happy Father's Day
Sunday, June 15

Scenes from the second annual Shining Stars Festival on Saturday & Sunday June 7 and 8. The event is a fund-raiser for various children's organizations in the valley.

I.V. Golf Club Twilight

- Mary Ahlers, Ken Lewis, Home Valley Bank, 57
- Buster Short, Bruce Kates, Cedar Row Farm, 56
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- Ed Weitzel, Arnold Mellow, Klamath First Federal, 53
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- Paul Bohey, Joey Brown, P&J's Par Salvage, 24
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- Perry Pullen, Daryl Ponder, PJ's Café, 12
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- Terry Taylor, Ken Hobbback, Taylor's Country Store, 48
- Jim Graham, Joe Crutchfield, Crutchfield Construction, 47
- Chuck Taylor, Scott Taylor, Taylor's Sausage, 42
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- Vern Klicker, Dan Klicker, Creative Wildlife Studio, 37
- Bill McMorrine, Ray Buckley, J.D. Sports Pub, 33
- Bob McGregor, George Mosier, Design Drafting Service, 31
- Jared Kinkade, Lou Trujillo, I.V. Golf Course, 31
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- Charlie Gill, Jason Gill, Clouser Drilling, 13.

Club News

I.V. Golf Course

The Illinois Valley Golf Association Board meeting will be held Tuesday, June 17, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at the golf course clubhouse. Meetings are open to the public. Come see the improvements to the grounds and clubhouse.

For more information phone Arnold Mellow at 592-3525.

Garden Club

Illinois Valley Garden Clubs' annual potluck picnic will be held on June 13 at 11 a.m. at Grayback Campground. Dinner will begin at 2 p.m. Bring a dish to share and a place service. Coffee and tea will be served. Officers that will be installed include: Edith Martin, president; Darlene Milner, secretary and Diana Reitan, treasurer. Greg Crowl received this year's I.V. Garden Club scholarship.

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(served on French Bread & topped with onion rings)

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All meals include a special "Fruit & Sweets" dessert and non-alcoholic beverage.

Sunday, June 15 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM in the Dining Room

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