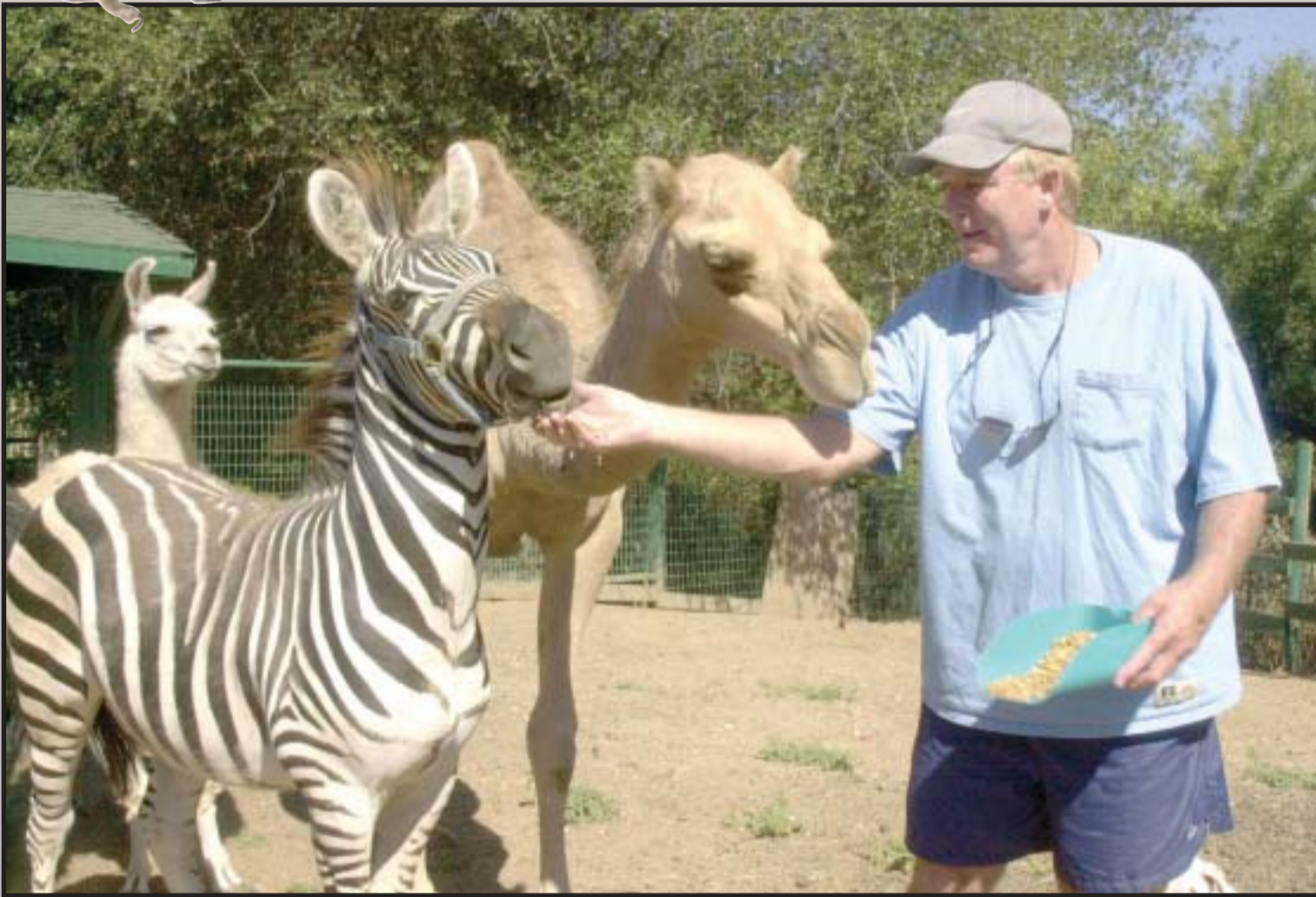


ON SAFARI... In Loomis?



Loomis resident Mike Veranza feeds his pet zebra, Zippy, while Cammy the camel and a curious alpaca wait for a few tasty nuggets. Below, Veranza has a little bit of fun with another of his beloved animals, a goat.

Cammy the camel and Zippy the zebra are just a few of the exotic wonders that have helped Loomis' Mike Veranza realize a life-long dream

A LONG A WINDING, GRAVEL ROAD LEADING TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF RURAL LOOMIS, A SMALL SLICE OF EXOTIC NATURE SURROUNDS TWO HOUSES SITTING ON SIX ACRES OF LAND.

On this land, a zebra and camel share a home with four dogs, an emu, a goat and several other types of four-legged animals.

Two aviaries are home to several types of macaws, a cockatoo, a blue-crown conure, a toucan and an Amazon parrot.

Across the way, a sparkling pond offers the glorious view of black and white swans, Egyptian and African geese and Australian shell ducks swimming at a leisurely pace. On the land a fleet of ducklings follow its mother into the water.

The estate's owner is Mike Veranza, a gentle spirited man whose fun demeanor and big heart



Story by Keith Reid
Photos by Karina Williams

makes him a softy when it comes to the creatures of the earth. He's a semi-retired businessman who relocated to Loomis from Lake Tahoe four years ago.

"I've always loved animals," Veranza said. "It started when I was 8 years old and I got my first cat. I've always had pets. There are about 100 animals on the land. Maybe I'm a bit eccentric."

As Veranza opens the gateway to his 1-year-old zebra, Zippy, and 3-year-old camel, Cammy, he's greeted warmly.

Cammy puts Veranza in a friendly headlock and Zippy excitedly begs for a pet on the nose.

"I got Zippy when he was 6 months old and we bottle-fed him for about six months," Phillips said.

Inside the aviary, which can be viewed through Veranza's kitchen window, he describes the differences between a blue/gold, mill gold and hyacinth macaw. All of them are feathered with bright colors of red, green or blue but with different patterns and sizes. He asks his son Vern Veranza to feed the

See *Safari*, page A3

Sutter Health pediatrician undergoes gender change

Parent of patient takes exception; others say they're undisturbed

By Sarah Langford
Gold Country News Service

When Teresa Yaronon brought in her 4-year-old daughter for a routine checkup on June 11, she noticed something was different about Dr. Milazzo.

Instead of having a short haircut and full beard, he wore his hair in a wispy, shoulder-length style and had a smooth face.

His nails showed a French manicure and he wore female jewelry. He also had a small bust.

Dr. Charles F. Milazzo was becoming a woman.

"I was shocked," said Yaronon, who has been taking her children to see Milazzo at his Roseville office for about six years. "His voice was higher and he was wearing a pink shirt. It was obvious that a change was going on."

Milazzo, an independent affiliate of Sutter Roseville Medical Center, says he suffers from Gender Identity Disorder (GID), the condition commonly referred to as transsexualism.

The 50-year-old pediatrician said he has seen a gender therapist for several years and began slowly transitioning from male to female about three years ago as part of his treatment.

See *Milazzo*, page A7



Dr. Charles F. Milazzo

City Council approves annual budget

By Brenda Meadows
The Placer Herald

Rocklin's budding 2004-05 budget of \$59.5 million, a \$2 million increase from last year, was approved unanimously at the June 22 City Council meeting.

Although city managers have been squirreling away money for a decade to deal with anticipated growth, a quarter million dollar cut in state funding caused some juggling on the part of the city financial department.

"One important thing to notice with this as well as with previous city budgets is that, in spite of the uncertainty created by the annual raids on local funds by the legislature, our budget continues to be balanced and continues to address community needs," City Manager Carlos Urrutia said.

An \$11.94 million account for city construction includes plans for a gymnasium as well as a swimming pool at the new Liberty High School

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Fish used to tackle West Nile virus

By Gus Thomson
Gold Country News Service

The answer to the threat of West Nile Virus is simple. "Don't get bitten by mosquitoes," said Dr. Michael Mulligan, Placer County assistant public health officer.

"Mosquito bites are always annoying, and in the case of West Nile Virus, can make you very sick."

Taking common-sense steps can help avoid the problem alto-

gether, he said.

Placer County health officials are actively monitoring mosquito, bird, horse and human populations, watching for possible signs of infection. Ten human cases of West Nile have been confirmed in California this year, all in the Los Angeles area. All victims recovered. The virus is spread from the bite of an infected mosquito. It also infects birds and horses.

Some of the basic advice being

given by health professionals is to avoid activities outside when mosquitoes are present, make sure doors and windows have tight screens and eliminate all sources of standing water that can support breeding mosquitoes.

On Monday, the Nevada County West Nile Virus Task Force provided an opportunity for people to stock their ponds with free mosquito-eating fish.

See *Virus*, page A12



Mosquito-eating fish are being used to fight the the threat of West Nile virus in Placer County.

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