



# PALS PRESS

Newsletter of Calgary's Pet Access League Society



Fall 2001

## Welcome Back! - Sandra

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Summer is winding down, people are back from vacations, kids have returned to school and we can now look forward to resuming regular visits. Summers never are great for consistency so some facilities actually cancel summer visits. This year record temperatures added to the summer problem because some facilities became virtual ovens. My one visit was cut very short simply because my four year old dog couldn't handle the heat. In fact it was so hot, I had trouble getting my breath on one floor! We left and even though he had access to water and an air-conditioned vehicle, he didn't resume normal panting until after we were home. If any of you had similar visiting experiences or if your pet had diarrhea or vomiting following a visit, please let me know because if we are risking the health of our pets we may need to reconsider some of our summer visiting practices.

The casino heralded the beginning of our busiest time of the year. We had a booth at the Na-

tional Agility Championships and later this year we will be involved in the Pet Expo, Santa Parade, and the Art Market. I hope that everyone in PALS will help with at least one of these events.

Regula is very busy setting up interviews, screening dates, and orientations. The volunteers who help PALS in both of these areas are a wonderful, dedicated group. They give up evenings and weekends to help do what neither Regula nor I could accomplish alone or even together. Just to give you a scope of their assistance the interviewers will, by year-end, interview well over seventy people. The screeners will perform over 120 evaluations on new and existing PALS pets.

PALS really is an amazing organization. We have nearly 500 volunteers and only 1.5 paid staff positions. PALS is the largest single municipality pet therapy/visitation program in North America and our volunteers make it the BEST.

## National Agility Competition - Sandra

### Dates to Remember:

- \* Blessing of the Animals - Sept 29
- \* Bingo - Oct 3, Nov 12 & Dec 22
- \* Pet Expo - Oct 27 & 28
- \* Santa Claus Parade - Nov 17
- \* Art Market - Nov 15 to 18

Many thanks to all of the volunteers who answered my desperation e-mail and came out to help at the PALS booth. The weather was great and there were lots of people out enjoying the event. Our volunteers had a great time talking to people about PALS and letting people pet their dogs. This was the first public appearance for one of our newest PALS pets and I understand it didn't take her too long to get the hang of things probably because she was surrounded by all of the great role models wearing their PALS "blues". They were wonderful ambassadors for the program. Thank

you to everyone for helping out with the event.

While I was there I did take in some of the agility competition and it never ceases to amaze me how extraordinary the team of dog and handler are. The course is run after only a human walk through so, contrary to what many people think, the dogs do not know the course and rely completely on their owners to give accurate and clear direction. When it works it is a remarkable display of teamwork. Regardless of their standings in the competition, they have my admiration for a job well done.

## Santa Is Calling You!

PALS has been invited to participate in the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Santa Claus Parade on November 17<sup>th</sup>. This is an event for the whole family so dress everyone for the season and join us in making the PALS entry the most popular part of the parade again this year! The parade starts at noon but we invite you to join us for a pre-parade hot chocolate and puppy treats. The parade route again this year will be down 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue so we need lots of volunteers. Which brings me to another thought...

When the parade moved to 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue it lost the slow pace and intimacy that 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue had. Our group walked along the curb so their animals could be petted, hugged and touched. It worked on 8<sup>th</sup> because "curb to curb" was often only about 10 feet. On 9<sup>th</sup> the distance between curbs is huge so we basically left a huge expanse in the centre of the road. In addition, the relaxed pace we enjoyed on 8<sup>th</sup> was gone and our volunteers found it impossible to intermingle with the spectators and keep

up. What became evident was that we could no longer be interactive.

If we continue with participation in this event our focus needs to be community awareness. About 50,000 people view this parade and it is televised. It is really a great opportunity to get out and make people aware that we exist. No there won't be a lot of opportunity to mingle with the spectators but it is a wonderful opportunity to raise community awareness for our program. This year we would like to add a classic or vintage car to our entry so, if you have one that you are eager to show off, please let us know as soon as possible.

If you would like to join us, call Joan Andersen at res. 249-3484, work 245-3371 (Wed, Thu, Fri.), fax 242-2198, e-mail jandersen@home.com, or call the PALS office. (If you call Joan at work please ask for Peggy Joan.)

## Office Renovations - Sandra

During the weeks I was on vacation, relaxing in my comfy lawn chair, sipping tall cool drinks and flipping through the pages of the latest trendy magazines, some very busy people gave the PALS office a long overdue brand new look. Gone are the horizontally challenged blinds, the duct taped carpet and the pink walls. They have been replaced and the result is a much cleaner and classic look.

Despite the heat, sore muscles, broken nails and bruises Regula managed to complete a wonderful transformation of the PALS office before I got back. Well, there was sort of an odd pile of "rock hard and beyond any hope" painting supplies that we had to discard but basically the office was done and it looked wonderful.

A huge thank you goes out to Martha Nagel who, during the absolute hottest days of the year, spent many hours in the PALS office helping paint. Thank you, Martha. We appreciate your time, effort, and incredible sense of humour that helped make the work go a lot faster.

And thank you Regula for doing this for PALS. I know that it was not an easy undertaking and proved to be more difficult than you anticipated, but you did a heck of a job and you should be proud of the outcome.



## The 5th Annual Blessing of the Animals

You are invited to bring your companion animals to this interdenominational celebration of life and thanksgiving for all creation.

There will be a special time to honour those beloved pets that have departed on Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m at Cathedral Church of the Redeemer, 218 – 7 Avenue S.E.

For further information contact the Calgary Humane Society @250-7722 ext. 303 or Heather @ 249-7468.





## Calgary Pet Expo

October 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001

Round Up Centre, Stampede Park

Show Hours: Saturday and Sunday 10 am to 6 pm



Visit any one of the Pet Planet locations to pick up your \$2.00 family discount coupon.



### Special Attractions:

Petting Zoo – piglets, lambs, goats, chicks, rabbits

Care & Maintenance – grooming, therapists, 1<sup>st</sup> Aid, trainers

Equine Arena – llamas, miniature donkeys, horses, riding demos and pony rides

Show Ring – agility, fly ball, tricks

PLUS over 150 exhibitor booths including associations, breeders, clubs, retailers, trainers, manufacturers

## Extra Visits

If you are interested in doing any additional visits on a regular basis we have urgent requirements in the following facilities:

*Dr. Gordon Townsend School* – This school is located in the Children's Hospital. This team requires volunteers who have daytime availability and can commit to one visit per week. The current visit schedule is Wednesday and Friday and we attend on a modified school year calendar.

This means that volunteers get time off during winter, spring, and summer breaks. Pets must be comfortable with groups of children and around high activity.

*Crossbow Carewest* – This is a senior's facility located near the site of the old General Hospital. This team requires volunteers who have daytime availability and can commit to one additional visit per month. The team visits on the first Thursday of each month at 1:45 pm. This team is almost exclusively Golden Retrievers so something different would be wonderful. Currently many of the seniors believe only one dog is visiting them.

*Beverly Care Centre* – This is a senior's facility located just south of the Rocky View Hospital. This team requires volunteers who can commit to one additional evening visit on the third Monday of each month.

*Saturday Visits (10 am)* – A number of our Saturday teams in the north end of the city are in need of additional volunteers. This is a very difficult day for us to find volunteers so any additional help would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact Sandra at the PALS office if you are interested in any of the above positions. Also remember, volunteers are welcome to increase the number of visits they do each month.



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