



PALS PRESS

Newsletter of Calgary's Pet Access League Society

The Journey by Crystal Ward Kent

Winter 2002

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Dates to Remember:

- * Bow Valley Special Visit
January 21
- * Cerebral Palsy Assoc. Visit
January 28
- * Bingo - Dec 19, Jan 30,
Mar 11
- * Casino - June 6/7

When you bring a pet into your life, you begin a journey - a journey that will bring you more love and devotion than you have ever known, yet also test your strength and courage. If you allow, the journey will teach you many things, about life, about yourself, and most of all, about love. You will come away changed forever, for one soul cannot touch another without leaving its mark. Along the way, you will learn much about savoring life's simple measures - jumping in leaves, snoozing in the sun, the joys of puddles, and even the satisfaction of a good scratch behind the ears. If you spend much time outside, you will be taught how to truly experience every element, for no rock, leaf, or log will go unexamined, no rustling bush will be overlooked, and even the very air will be inhaled, pondered, and noted as being full of valuable information. Your pace may be slower except when heading home to the food dish - but you will become a better naturalist, having been taught by an expert in the field.

Too many times we hike on automatic pilot, our goal being to complete the trail rather than enjoy the journey. We miss the details - the colorful mushrooms on the rotting log, the honeycomb in the old maple snag, the hawk feather caught on a twig. Once we walk as a dog does, we discover a whole new world. We stop; we browse the landscape, we kick over leaves, peek in tree holes, look up, down, all around. And we learn what any dog knows: that nature has created a marvelously complex world that is full of surprises, that each cycle of the seasons bring ever changing wonders, each day an essence all its own. Even from indoors you will find yourself more attuned to the world around you. You will find yourself watching summer insects collecting on a screen or noting the flick and flash of fireflies through the dark. You will stop to observe the swirling dance of windblown leaves, or sniff the air after a rain. It does not matter that there is no objective in this; the point is in the doing, in not letting life's most important details slip by.

You will find yourself doing silly things that your pet-less friends might not understand: spending thirty minutes in the grocery aisle looking for the cat food brand your feline must have, buying dog birthday treats, or driving around the block an extra time because your pet enjoys the ride. You will roll in the snow, wrestle with chewy toys, bounce little rubber balls till your eyes cross, and even run around the house trailing your bathrobe tie - with a cat in hot pursuit - all in the name of love. Your house will become muddier and hairier. You will wear less dark clothing and buy more lint rollers. You may find dog biscuits in your pocket or purse, and feel the need to explain that an old plastic shopping bag adorns your living room rug because your cat loves the crinkly sound.

You will learn the true measure of love - the steadfast, undying kind that says, "It doesn't matter where we are or what we do, or how life treats us as long as we are together." Respect this always. It is the most precious gift any living soul can give another. You will not find it often among the human race (so true!). And you will learn humility. The look in my dog's eyes often made me feel ashamed. Such joy and love at my presence. She saw not some flawed human who could be cross and stubborn, moody or rude, but only her wonderful companion. Or maybe she saw those things and dismissed them as mere human foibles, not worth considering, and so chose to love me anyway. If you pay attention and learn well, when the journey is done, you will be not just a better person, but the person your pet always knew you to be, the one they were proud to call beloved friend. I must caution you that this journey is not without pain. Like all paths of true love, the pain is part of loving. For as surely as the sun sets, one day your dear animal companion will follow a trail you cannot yet go down. And you will have to find the strength and love to let them go. A pet's time on earth is far too short - especially for those that love them. We borrow them, really, just for awhile, and during these brief years they are generous enough to give us all their love, every inch of their spirit and heart, until one day there is nothing left.

The cat that only yesterday was a kitten is all too soon old and frail and sleeping in the sun. The young pup of boundless energy wakes up stiff and lame, the muzzle now gray. Deep down we somehow always knew that this journey would end. We knew that if we gave our hearts they would be broken. But give them we must for it is all they ask in return. When the time comes, and the road curves ahead to a place we cannot see, we give one final gift and let them run on ahead - young and whole once more. "Godspeed, good friend," we say, until our journey comes full circle and our paths cross again.

~ In memory of those who shared our lives and brought us together. ~



The office will be closed from December 23 to January 1 for Christmas

Another Successful Art Market!

Thank you so very much to all the volunteers who helped out at the November 2002 Art Market. I wish you could have heard all the compliments I've had about you - don't let those halos slip or tarnish! We made \$6,582 in total, made up from \$3,200 from booth relief, \$2,267.00 in sales and a record of \$1,115.00 in the Loonie Bin.

The dogs and cats were perfect and, as usual, everyone wanted to know how they were so well behaved - there must be lots of 'bad' dogs and cats out there!

A special thank you to those volunteers who took over one vendor's booth when she was taken ill. Thank you to Elaine and Mr. Mouse for the book signing - Mr. Mouse really has to learn to put his paw print on the books!

See you all next year and hope you all had fun as well.

Merry Christmas, Eileen



- photo courtesy of James Miller

Calgary Pet Expo



Another Pet Expo has come and gone and it was quite a success, in fact, maybe too much of a success. Our volunteers and their dogs deserve huge kudos - the whole show was so well attended that it was quite a chore for them just to make it through the crowds to the PALS booth. Bart looks pretty chipper in this picture; must have been taken at the beginning of his shift!

A Fine PALS doggie named Bart
Went to Pet Expo to do his part
He looked so damned cute
That Tamzin did shoot
With her camera and captured our hearts!

- photo courtesy of Animals in Focus Photography

Halloween at the Children's Hospital

The October 30th visit at the Children's Hospital was extra special this year. Even Cruella and her Dal, Teemu, made an appearance much to the delight of the kids. Kody, the lab, and Gladys the basset swapped costumes partway through the visit as Gladys kept tripping on her long blond locks. Talk about friends helping friends. Disney celebrated her first Halloween with the team by dressing as a witch. Of course she was a good witch. That probably explains why her pointy hat kept sliding off. Not to be outdone, P'ing got into the spirit of things by dressing her owner in quantities of pug fur. To paraphrase Gladys, everyone had a howling good time!

- photo courtesy of Shelly Tamtom, ACH Child Life Specialist



Thank You To Shell Canada

Thanks to a \$1000.00 grant from the Shell Canada Community Fund, PALS was able to purchase a new computer for the office. These funds came at a very opportune time as Sandra's existing computer hardware was causing daily problems and had earned the moniker "Crash". Needless to say, Sandra was delighted to bid the old system farewell.

These funds were awarded to recognize and support the volunteer efforts of Shell employee Larry Best. Larry, his wife Maureen and their dog Rielly have visited the seniors at the Bethany Care Centre since the fall of 2000.

Shell believes that contributions of time, effort and caring to non-profit organizations benefit the entire community. Through the Community Service Fund, they recognize and support Shell people who give personal time to non-profit organizations like PALS.

PALS would like to thank Shell for its continued support. Also thank you Larry, Maureen and Reilly for making the time to volunteer.

PALS is Having a Non-Bottle Drive

PALS First (maybe annual) Non-Centralized Bottle Drive — At PALS, we like to treat our volunteers well. We don't like to make inordinate demands of them. So if you like to do things on your own schedule - if you don't like back-breaking, boring work, and if you prefer to control whether or not you are exposed to smoke in your environment, then this is THE event for you!

Most people consume more than their usual amount of soft drinks and other liquid refreshments during the holiday season and are left with all those annoying bottles and cans after the holidays are over. We would like to suggest that you return these items to the bottle depot of **your choice**, at a time that suits **you** best, and send the proceeds to PALS. No getting up at the crack of dawn. No annoying sticky shoes and fingers. No sore back. No standing out in a cold parking lot waiting for the bottle depot truck to arrive. Just a nice crisp receipt from PALS for any donations of \$10.00 or more!

Special PALS People

We have just finished our last intake for 2002. This process involves a great deal of effort on the part of a special group of PALS volunteers - the people who give up their evenings and weekends to interview candidates and to screen animals. To all these wonderful people, we extend a very special thank you. We **really** couldn't function without you!

PALS would like to thank Eileen Gavan, Sheryl van Otterloo and Natalie Myers for all of the work they put into making the Art Market a success this year. All three of these ladies put in a tremendous amount of time at this event and we could not have done it without them. Thank you!

PALS CELEBRITIES

James Miller and his dog Disney were featured in the December issue of the ACH volunteer newsletter. If you want to read more about this amazing PALS duo visit

http://www.crha-health.ab.ca/vol_res/ACH2/newsletter.htm



Jamey, a PALS wannabe, owned by Tineke Schollaardt was "Dog of the Day" on September 20th, 2002. If you want to check out this cute little greyhound visit <http://www.dogoftheday.com>



At Mountain Bones, they love PALS! That is why our very own PALS volunteer Stormy is featured on their new packages of Peanut Butter & Banana Snacks. Mountain Bones gets "more than just a pretty face" to put on their packaging and for PALS there is the equivalent of 50,000 "brochures" out there for the general public to see at no cost to the organization - a true win-win situation. Mountain Bones packages can be found at a number of area outlets.

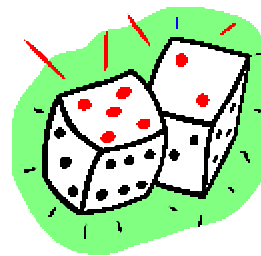
CALGARY - All Calgary Co-op, Petland Superstores & Pet Planet Stores, Especially for Pets – N.E., Community Natural Foods – Chinook & Downtown, Sunterra Markets – SW, Trailblazers – SE

COCHRANE - In the Raw STRATHMORE - Sevvick Vet Services

UPCOMING EVENTS

Casino— June 6 & 7, 2003. (Friday & Saturday) at Casino Calgary

Have you ever wondered what it felt like to hold \$50,000 in cash or build a money tower in excess of \$200,000? When was the last time you stayed up past midnight swapping your favorite dog stories or people watching? PALS is hosting another casino and we need volunteers to help with this huge fundraiser. We expect to earn in excess of \$50,000 for the 2 day event so the effort is well worth it. If you can help with this event please complete the Casino Volunteer Worker Application enclosed with this newsletter, contact the PALS office at 250-7257 or email us at info@palspets.com



Bingo - December 19, January 30, March 11. If you would like to help out, please contact Audrey Giefer @ 248-6422.

Special Visits

January 21 at Bow Valley 1100, 7 to 8 pm. We need 3 volunteers with their pets for a special visit with the seniors.

January 28 at the Cerebral Palsy Association of Alberta, 7 to 8 pm. We need 3 volunteers with your pets for a special visit with the kids.

If you and your pet are interested in helping out with either of these visits, please contact the PALS office at 250-7257 or email us at info@palspets.com.



Entertainment Books

Entertainment Book sales a real success this year! I would like to thank everyone who bought and helped sell the books this year. We did have six unsold books returned to the office so, if anyone still needs a book, give the PALS office a call at 250-7257



Address Change

Please update your email address books. As of Jan. 1 the pals@nucleus.com email address will no longer be in operation. With more and more of our communication happening via email it became necessary to update to a higher speed service.

In the new year, all email should be sent to either info@palspets.com or to reach Joan directly, joan@palspets.com



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO



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