


EASE NEWS



ENVIRONMENTAL ANIMAL SANCTUARY AND EDUCATION
THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE **F OF EASE**

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Editorial

***H**appy New Year to our Friends and welcome to another issue of EASE News. This edition of our newsletter contains an important update on our Pet Loss Support Services and the introduction of our new podcast.*

We also have articles covering animal-related news and other relevant current affairs.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter – perhaps something to read if you get snowed in this winter!

*MELINDA HILL
EASE PROJECT MANAGER*

EASE Pet Loss Support Services update

*ANGELA GARNER
EASE PET LOSS SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR*

I am very pleased to be able to report on an exciting development in the EASE Pet Loss Support Services.

As many of you know, we have in recent times started to provide a new Preparing for Pet Loss Support programme, which offers email support to people before, during and after pet loss. This service replaced our earlier pet bereavement support service via email and/or telephone, and complements the comprehensive literature EASE offers in downloadable support sheets, articles, an on-line recording, poster, CD and pet sympathy cards.

For the last nine years or so I have been the only EASE counsellor, but from 1 January 2010 there are now three of us working on the Preparing for Pet Loss programme. A couple of months ago we received offers of help from two ladies who had

come across EASE and who wanted to volunteer their time to help: Debby, who practises as a Pet Loss Counsellor, came across our website in the course of her research, and Heather, who attended a bereavement support training session I was doing at her place of work. Both Debby and Heather will introduce themselves in this newsletter, but suffice it to say that Melinda and I are delighted to welcome on board two such enthusiastic and experienced volunteers.

I am looking forward to the three of us working together – it will be marvellous to be part of a close-knit team, pooling our experiences and ideas in offering people comfort and support through the challenging time of anticipated pet loss.

There will be more news on the progress of the Pet Loss Support Services in the next newsletter; in the meantime, I am pleased to introduce Debby and Heather.



Heather Ross

I have had a passion for animals since childhood and share my home by the sea with my partner, and with my beloved black Labrador and two rescue cats who rule the roost! By day I work at The Donkey Sanctuary, providing administrative support to Welfare Officers who investigate reports of cruelty or neglect and who offer members of the public help and advice on caring for donkeys.



I have trained as a ‘Samaritan’ providing confidential non-judgmental emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, and have also undertaken a counselling skills course.

I hope that my natural compassion and understanding of how important animals are in our lives will be beneficial to the preparing for pet loss programme, and I’m very much looking forward to joining the team at EASE.



Debby Wakeham

I have lived with animals nearly all my life and, inevitably, this has meant that I have experienced many times over the heartbreak of losing them. For those of us who love animals, they truly are part of the family.

Having done ten years’ voluntary counselling for human loss with Cruse Bereavement Care, I know how important it is for people to have someone who will really listen and try to understand things from their point of view. People grieving for a beloved pet can feel particularly lonely and isolated – and perhaps find it more difficult to seek the help they need, as the depth of this special grief is not yet fully recognised.



In 2002, I started producing a newsletter called *Departed Friend* for people bereaved by the loss of an animal. The newsletter contains relevant articles and also tributes to lost loved ones, written by their grieving humans, who find it comforting and cathartic to pay tribute in this way. The newsletter is distributed by post or by email.

I have a Diploma in Companion Animal Bereavement Counselling through the Animal Care College, accredited by the National Open College Network (NOCN). Through *Departed Friend*, I offer face-to-face counselling and support by telephone, letter and email.

I like to keep informed of other resources, and one day I discovered EASE. I was very impressed by the website and particularly the fact that EASE offers email support in preparing for pet loss; this is such a vitally-needed service and I had not heard of anyone else who does it. I congratulated them and sent them information about my own work and (with permission) featured EASE in one of my newsletters.

I was honoured and delighted when Mel and Angela at EASE asked me to be part of their Preparing for Pet Loss programme, and am really looking forward to a richly rewarding association with a wonderful organisation.



THE POWER OF THE DOG

WHEN THE BODY THAT LIVED AT YOUR SINGLE WILL
WITH ITS WHIMPER OF WELCOME, IS STILLED (HOW STILL!)
WHEN THE SPIRIT THAT ANSWERED YOUR EVERY MOOD
IS GONE – WHEREVER IT GOES – FOR GOOD,
YOU WILL DISCOVER HOW MUCH YOU CARE,
AND YOU WILL GIVE YOUR HEART TO A DOG TO TEAR.

RUDYARD KIPLING

No pets allowed

When people move into sheltered accommodation, they may gain in terms of the care and attention they receive, but there are inevitable losses: of privacy, independence, the home they may have lived in for years. There may not be room for treasured possessions accumulated over the years. If, on top of all that, they are also forced to part with a beloved companion animal, the loss may be too much to bear. The 'No Pets Allowed' rule is inhuman – and it shows that, even in the 21st century, many people simply do not understand the strength of the bond and the distress caused when it is severed.

The problem is not just in sheltered housing. Many landlords, even in country areas, have a 'No Pets' policy. So-called 'advice' given by a local Citizens' Advice Bureau to a couple in financial difficulties was to get rid of some of their cats!

Luckily, the situation regarding sheltered accommodation is slowly improving. Some establishments have resident animals and others allow owners to move in with their existing pets. The Cinnamon Trust (www.cinnamon.org.uk) has a register of nursing homes, care homes and sheltered homes which accept residents' pets.

This is a topic that is gaining attention among animal organisations and other relevant bodies, and various processes are aiming to changing this inhumane practice. More on this will be reported on in future editions of EASE News as it unfolds.

Adapted from an article in Departed Friend newsletter June 2009 and reprinted here with permission.



EASE Podcast

Yes, we at EASE are moving into the 21st century and embracing new technology! For those EASE friends who – like we were – are perhaps not too familiar with the term 'podcast', Wikipedia (an online encyclopaedia)

tells us that 'a podcast is a series of digital media files, usually either digital audio or video, made available for download via the web'.

So our first EASE podcast will be available free from February from our website (www.ease-animals.org.uk). It is entitled 'Sentiment alignments about the little people', and in it we share some of our core views and feelings about animals.

We hope you will enjoy listening to it!



Doggy Story (Anon)

An older, tired-looking dog wandered into my yard. I could tell from his collar and well-fed belly that he had a home and was well taken care of. He calmly came over to me, I gave him a few pats on his head; he then followed me into my house, slowly walked down the hall, curled up in the corner and fell asleep. An hour later, he went to the door, and I let him out.



The next day he was back, greeted me in my yard, walked inside and resumed his spot in the hall and again slept for about an hour. This continued off and on for several weeks. Curious, I pinned a note to his collar: 'I would like to find out who the owner of this wonderful sweet dog is and ask if you are aware that almost every afternoon your dog comes to my house for a nap.'

The next day he arrived for his nap, with a different note pinned to his collar: 'He lives in a home with six children, two of which are under the age of three - he's trying to catch up on his sleep. Can I come with him tomorrow?!'



Climate Change and Koala Bears

We are all becoming increasingly aware of the sometimes devastating effects of current climate change all across the globe. In November of last year, Australia saw some of the hottest weather it has ever seen, with temperatures reaching 120 degrees Fahrenheit. And of course, it's not just humans who suffer in these situations.. It was so hot for a week that koala bears were asking people for water. It has never been seen before.



One koala went into a house to find some shade away from the heat, and when the owner gave it some water it drank it enthusiastically and then proceeded to cool itself down...



How wonderful to see wildlife being treated with such kindness and respect!

The PDSA medal for a heroic dog

George the Jack Russell was given a posthumous PDSA Gold Medal, the animal equivalent of the George Cross, at a special ceremony in his home town.

He had been out for a walk with five local children, aged between three and 12 years old, when a pair of pit bull terriers set upon them. The 14-year-old dog sustained significant injuries as he shielded the youngsters from the attack. He later died from his wounds.

Hundreds of people, including the children he saved, turned out to honour George at the presentation in Manaia, New Zealand. Governor-General Anand Satyanand handed over the award to George's owner, widower Alan Gay, on behalf of British veterinary charity PDSA.



The PDSA Gold Medal

The medal was hung around the neck of a statue of the brave dog, which has been erected in the town in his memory. "There's no doubt that George was a small dog with a lion's share of courage," said PDSA Director-General Jan McLoughlin.

"Each account of his devotion to the five children on the day of the incident tells of a dog that was not afraid to face great fear in order to protect his friends. The children will never forget George's sacrifice and the PDSA is proud to honour this exceptionally brave dog."



Dorothy

It is with rapt fascination that a photograph of a deceased chimpanzee being visibly mourned by dozens of chimpanzees looking on as the body is being wheeled for burial has transfixed viewers across the Internet, on television, and in countless publications, with its soul-piercing sadness.



The image of the matriarch Dorothy, lying still amid orphaned chimpanzees at Sanaga-Yong Chimpanzee Rescue Centre in Cameroon, Africa, is something wondrous to behold. The Sanaga-Yong Centre – which provides sanctuary for nearly 70 orphans, victims of the illegal bushmeat trade – is a project of In Defence of Animals (IDA) Africa and is the creation of IDA's Dr. Sheri Speede, who first travelled to the country to volunteer her veterinary skills. She made friends with three chimpanzees, Becky, Jacky, and Pepe – who had suffered decades in small cages at a resort hotel and who in 1999 became the first adult chimpanzees to be rescued in Cameroon. In 2000, IDA Africa organised a forced confiscation of adult chimpanzees Dorothy and Nama, and eight monkeys, the first armed confiscation of illegally-held primates in Cameroon.

The striking image by Sanaga-Yong volunteer Monica Szczupider, which first appeared in the November 2009 issue of *National Geographic*, captures exquisitely the personal sharing of the fate among non-humans brought together by a common purpose and who form extraordinary bonds of friendship. The photo subsequently appeared on *Inside edition* and *ABC News*, and in the *New York Post*, the *London Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail* and a variety of other newspapers and websites around the world.

The writer Susan Sontag in *On Photography* wrote that “photographs do not explain; they acknowledge.” When looking at the photo, one immediately feels the magnitude and closeness of the family of chimpanzees. In all the marvel of their chimpanzee nature and sophisticated minds, our closest genetic kin possess their own dialects and cultures, they teach their young, use tools, and are self-aware, conscious of themselves and their futures. And as is evident in the photo, they feel sorrow and mourn the deaths of loved ones.

Orphaned by a hunter who killed her mother, Dorothy was sold as a “mascot” to an amusement park hotel, where she was chained by her neck. For somewhere between 25 and 40 dark years she endured the endless mocking and jeering of visitors to the park, as she was taught to drink beer and beg for cigarettes to the great delight of onlookers. People laughed mercilessly at Dorothy but no one came near enough to touch her. She was labelled vicious by the hotel staff. Once at the sanctuary, she made fast friends with many of the chimpanzees, even experiencing mother-love by adopting a baby orphan named Bouboule, whom she adored until the end of her life. Dorothy and Nama, another amusement park refugee and soul mate, lived in alpha-male Jacky's group of 27 chimpanzees. Dorothy was at the centre of it all – a beloved mother figure to many of the younger chimpanzees and a luminous presence everyone at Sanaga-Yong felt like a nimbus.

When Dorothy passed away on September 22, 2008, from what appeared to be heart failure, Dr. Speede said “many people from the villages, including the high chief of our seven villages, came to pay their respects. No one seemed to wonder for a second whether a funeral service was appropriate for a chimpanzee. They walked to the camp from their villages after learning of Dorothy's death, without being invited.

“We buried Dorothy beside the enclosure where she lived and beside the tomb of her friend Becky. All the chimpanzees in her family came to watch and mourn with us. When we brought her to the gravesite, they asked to see her again, so I took her body close for them to see her a final time. None of them left until the burial was finished.”

We are grateful to Diana Hartig for sending this remarkable account of bereavement in the chimpanzee community, which was published in the Departed Friend newsletter of June 2009 and is reprinted here with permission.

The Intelligence of Dolphins

Dolphins have been declared the world's second most intelligent creatures after humans, with scientists suggesting they are so bright that they should be treated as 'non-human persons'.

Studies into dolphin behaviour have highlighted how similar their communications are to those of humans and that they are brighter than chimpanzees. These have been backed up by anatomical research showing that dolphin brains have many key features associated with high intelligence.

The researchers argue that their work shows it is morally unacceptable to keep such intelligent animals in amusement parks or to kill them for food or by accident when fishing. Some 300,000 whales, dolphins and porpoises die in this way each year.

The studies show how dolphins have distinct personalities and a strong sense of self, and can think about the future. It has also become clear that they are 'cultural' animals, meaning that new types of behaviour can quickly be conveyed by one dolphin to another. One study showed that bottlenose dolphins could recognise themselves in a mirror and use it to inspect various parts of their bodies, an ability that had been thought limited to humans and great apes. Another study showed that captive animals also had the ability to learn a rudimentary symbol-based language.

Other research has shown that dolphins can solve difficult problems, while those living in the wild cooperate in ways that imply complex social structures and a high level of emotional sophistication. In one recent case, a dolphin rescued from the wild was taught to tail-walk while recuperating for three weeks in a dolphinarium in Australia. After she was released, scientists were astonished to see the trick spreading among wild dolphins who had learnt it from the former captive.

There are many similar examples, such as the way dolphins living off Western Australia learnt to hold sponges over their snouts to protect themselves when searching for spiny fish on the ocean floor.

Such observations have prompted questions about the brain structures that must underlie them. Size is only one factor – when it comes to intelligence, brain size is less important than its size relative to the body. What the researchers found was that the cerebral cortex and neocortex of bottlenose dolphins were so large that the anatomical ratios that assess cognitive capacity place it second only the human brain. They also found the brain cortex of dolphins such as the bottlenose had the same convoluted folds that are strongly linked with human intelligence. Such folds increase the volume of the cortex and the ability of brain cells to interconnect with each other.

The research will be presented at a conference in California in February, concluding that the new evidence about dolphin intelligence makes it morally repugnant to mistreat them.

Adapted from an article in The Sunday Times, 3 January 2010

The fact that we may have power
over animals,
does not necessarily mean
that we have earned it.



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