


EASE NEWS



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

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Editorial

Hello to our EASE Friends, and a Happy New Year to you all. Welcome to another newsletter – this first 2015 edition includes Angela Garner’s article on *Saying Goodbye to a Beloved Equine Friend*, and other stories from around the world concerning animals and their special relationship with people.

Many thanks to you all for your continued support.

MELINDA HILL
EASE PROJECT MANAGER

Following a successful pilot workshop at a local practice, with a vet doing the first session and me taking the second part on Coping with Grief, I was then asked to do a ‘training the trainer’ Continuing Professional Development day for the vets so that they can run the whole workshop themselves throughout the year.

As part of the hand-outs for the day, I created a special Support Sheet entitled, ‘Saying Goodbye to a Beloved Equine Friend’, and thought that this would make a useful additional resource for the EASE Pet Loss Support Services free downloads on the website. This is reproduced below.



News from Angela Garner

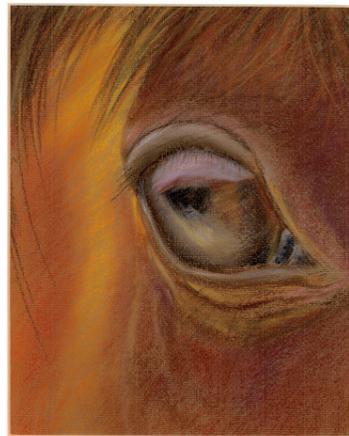
EASE’s Pet Bereavement Support Specialist

Earlier in the year I was delighted when I was approached by a national equine company to ask me to deliver equine bereavement support training. I find it very heartening that such importance and respect is being attributed to the equine-human relationship and the significance of the grief that people can experience at the loss of a much-loved horse, pony or donkey.

Each year this company organises a number of high-quality workshops on specific equine care topics which are run by vets within their own practice areas, and the focus for 2015 will be on equine end-of-life issues. The ‘Caring for Old Friends and Saying Goodbye’ workshops will include caring for sick or older equines, considering important aspects of euthanasia, and coping with the subsequent grief.

Saying Goodbye to a Beloved Equine Friend

Grief is a difficult subject but an important one, and understanding the process may well help to bring some peace of mind during this turbulent time. Because any significant shock, such as news of impending loss or grief, is likely to cause major disruption to the ongoing everyday normality of your life, you may find



that your overall sense of stability is temporarily ‘out of order’ and you’re left desperately trying to piece your life back together.

Preparing for loss

If you are preparing for the inevitable loss of a much-loved equine companion, staying in close

contact with your vet team will allow you to talk through any worries and concerns as they arise, and keep you best informed about what to expect as your horse's condition progresses. For example, it can help to settle the mind to find out what you can do yourself to keep your horse comfortable, what to look out for – such as certain behavioural changes or specific symptoms – and when to seek veterinary advice. Be sure to know how to get hold of the vet team urgently. Staying focused on your horse's needs can help you through this potentially emotionally traumatic time, and there is some comfort in knowing that you're doing everything you can for your beloved equine friend. If euthanasia is needed, it is important to plan ahead and get the practicalities in place to ensure that everything is done as you would wish and to avoid any further stress from having to make vital decisions in a rush.

Understanding and Coping with Grief

Grief of any kind is a natural and necessary process. It's a journey which everyone faces at different times during life, and it's certainly not something to simply 'get over'. Grief needs to be recognised for what it is – a natural reaction to the loss of a loved one, be that a person or an animal. On one level it may seem obvious in that losing someone you love is going to leave a huge gap in your life, but in an attempt to deepen the understanding, the following is one way of looking at this process.

We each have our own day-to-day routine which comprises the holding patterns we've formed up during our lives. Obviously these patterns change over time, but at any given moment they allow a level of stability and easement, and therefore, to some degree, a harmony. This is the case even if our life seems anything but harmonious because at least it is what we are used to and familiar with. Shock and grief cause a major disruption to these holding patterns, thereby disturbing one's ongoing harmony or 'normalness'. One way of considering this is by analogy: think of your daily routine as being made up of the many facets fitting neatly together, like a jigsaw puzzle, forming the overall picture that describes your life. Each piece is an integral part of the whole, including your relationships and everyone whom you value and care about. A significant shock, such as a death or the devastating news of terminal illness of a loved one, causes the many pieces of your life to come apart – as though the jigsaw puzzle, previously intact, has now been dashed to the ground, scattering into separate components. Then the overall picture, which up to now has

been familiar and secure with the normal interconnectedness of your everyday goings-on, disappears. So, in effect you may feel as though your life is suddenly 'in pieces'.

At first, you'll need time to take on board what has happened. Even when distressing news was expected the actuality often brings shock, which can make you feel numb or think 'this can't be happening'. Shock can make you feel 'all over the place' and 'out of sorts', often disturbing sleep and appetite; therefore it makes good sense to take extra care of yourself during this process. It is worth knowing that certain medical conditions can be exacerbated by shock and emotional upset, and it is therefore sometimes necessary to seek advice from healthcare professionals.

It is important to give yourself the time and space to work through the many emotions – to allow yourself to *feel what you feel*. Try not to censure these feelings but to release them as they arise. This might mean a lot of tears, perhaps anguish, deep sadness or maybe feelings of anger, all of which are natural and normal parts of grief. So rather than bottling things up for fear of appearing weak or unable to cope, recognise that you're going through a significant process which mustn't be rushed, and that it can help tremendously to talk things through with someone whom you know will understand.

However difficult it seems at times, know that within the process there comes a quiet healing, and eventually a settlement to the fact that life moves on – and that sometimes our beloved companions must move on before we do. We may always miss those whom we have loved and lost, but in our hearts and minds we can settle to holding onto the special times we shared and cherish the many memories gifted to us within our journey together.

There are hundreds of paths to scientific knowledge. The cruel ones can teach us only what we ought not to know.

George Bernard Shaw, 1927



World Watch 1

They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach – and it seems that applies to dogs too. As four Swedish athletes sat down to eat some canned meatballs ahead of a dangerous rainforest trek in Ecuador, they gave one to a stray pooch. That dog – who has now been named Arthur – then followed them to complete their 430-mile Adventure Racing World Championship.



It didn't matter what task they took on, Arthur the dog was there. He swam alongside them while they kayaked down rivers, dragged himself up hills during hikes and pulled through knee-deep mud during treks. Even when the team tried to get rid of him out of concern for his safety, he refused to leave.

Before one part of the race – a 36-mile kayak around the coast – organisers warned the team that taking Arthur along posed a risk to his and their safety. They tried to set off without him, but as they left he jumped into the water beside them and started desperately paddling. Team Captain Mikael Lindnord picked him up, put him in the kayak and let him stay for the rest of the journey.

Adventure Racing is a form of extreme sport that combines continuous hiking, trekking, mountain biking and kayaking over a successive number of days. The world championships held in Ecuador covered three diverse geographical regions – the Andes, the Pacific and the Amazon rainforest.

Since his return to Sweden, Arthur has been treated for a wound on his back which was three to six months old and still bleeding when the team found him. This has now healed.



In a FaceBook post Lindnord wrote: “I almost cried in front of the computer, when receiving the decision from Jordbruksverket (Board of Agriculture) in Sweden. I came to Ecuador to win the World Championship. Instead, I got a new friend.”



World Watch 2

Women mourn the death of Sonu, a female stray dog who has been living in their neighbourhood for the last 18 years, as they conduct her funeral in Ahmedabad.

According to the residents, Sonu has been guarding the neighbourhood round the clock and was a favourite of everyone.



Reproduced from: Outlook - Day in Pictures, 2/12/14

Pets and Older People

Recent studies into mental health and well-being in later life have identified pet ownership as an important factor in promoting good physical and psychological health in older people. However, only 40% of residential homes have recognised the benefits of interaction with pets in improving social interaction and reducing isolation.

Research has found that:

- 56% of residents support having animal residents
- 73% support having visiting animals
- 90% support an outside area to attract wildlife

Where responsible pet policies and practices exist, staff and residents report that:

- Pets contribute to the happiness of residents and are an important part of daily life for both pet owners and non-pet owners
- 99% of pet-related problems are minor and easily resolved
- There is minimal extra work for staff

Now a 'pet-friendly care kit' is being produced by SCAS (the Society for Companion Animal Studies). This kit aims to help homes to address the practical issues of including animals in their environment, to ensure the health and welfare of humans (residents and staff) and the animals involved, and thereby to improve the quality of life for all. The user-friendly kit will contain essential documentation, templates and information.

This kit adds into SCAS's growing body of research, campaigns and publications addressing the issues of elderly people, residential homes and pets. For more information visit www.scas.org.uk.



Animal Champions

This autumn I visited Kalkan, a small town on the 'turquoise coast' of Turkey, for a holiday. As I wandered through the cobbled streets of this town on my first day there, I was struck by how well the street dogs and cats appeared to be – contrary to my experience in some other holiday destinations. While the street animals were plentiful, they were well behaved and friendly, in good condition and living together harmoniously, some with ear tags. Little did I know at that point in time the story that lay behind this situation...

During my stay in Kalkan, through conversations with residents, I became aware of a local organisation – KAPSA (the Kalkan Association for the Protection of Street Animals). And what an organisation it is!

The volunteers of KAPSA, comprising mostly British people and local Turkish people, have undertaken to find a different solution to the stray dog and cat population of Turkey. Dog sanctuaries in Turkey are generally of a poor standard with poor hygiene and few effective policies in place, so KAPSA aims to solve the stray animal problem without recourse to rounding up the strays and putting them into one large holding place.

Instead, they operate a highly effective trap-neuter-release programme. This not only has the instant effect of neutering the stray population, but also has the long-term effect of drastically reducing the number of unwanted puppies and kittens. The total number of cats neutered since 2008 is 1508 and of dogs is 592. Each animal has to be caught or trapped, taken to the KAPSA-sponsored vet in the town for the neutering operation, held there during recovery and then released back to their original location – the cats with the tip of an ear snipped (the internationally-recognised sign of a neutered cat) and the dogs with an ear tag to identify them.

The volunteers of KAPSA also keep track of all the strays in the town, making sure they remain in good health and fed – particularly in off-season periods, as during the holiday season tourists often feed the friendly strays they come across. This

winter, 81 volunteers are feeding 192 dogs and 847 cats.

On top of this, the volunteers also educate local people about animal welfare, which includes giving talks and presentations in schools, as well as engaging in a myriad of fundraising activities to pay for the animal welfare they carry out.

And KAPSA also help in one other way – they work to find loving homes for those street dogs or cats that perhaps will not fare so well on the streets due to their nature. These new homes are often abroad, and KAPSA assist when tourists become attached to a particular stray animal and wish to give it a permanent home in their own country. Due to new DEFRA regulations dogs or cats coming in to the UK no longer have to undergo months of quarantine in a harsh kennel environment – the necessary period of time for the rabies vaccinations to take effect can now take place in the country of origin.

All of this great work is run purely on donations, and the good will of the many volunteers. The KAPSA FaceBook page is highly active, with lots of input from the volunteers, visitors to Kalkan and KAPSA supporters. Do take a look if you're on FaceBook, and otherwise you can visit www.kapsaonline.com for more information or to donate.

And on a more personal note, having seen the marvellous work KAPSA do and having met Sammy, a very sweet street dog who was clearly too timid to survive on the street, I had to offer him a home with me in the UK! He flies over on 4



January with three other KAPSA dogs bound for new loving homes in the UK, in the company of two lady volunteers who are bringing them all over.

A happy ending for some dogs, at least!



UK cat owners struggle to recognise stress

New research conducted by Cats Protection shows that cat owners in the UK find it difficult to recognise signs of stress in their pets and to know what to do about it.

More than half of cat owners questioned said that to calm their stressed cat they would give it a cuddle. Cats Protection's Behaviour Manager, Nicky Trevorow, says "Being held or stroked for too long can be very stressful for some cats. Space and peace are often what they need – they're not small furry humans so what would comfort us won't necessarily comfort them."

More than half of owners surveyed did not know that living with another cat or dog could be stressful for their pet, while only a quarter knew that regularly grooming a particular area was also an indication of stress.

Cat owners who want to understand more about feline behaviour can access a free online learning tool called Understanding Feline Origins at: <http://learnonline.cats.org.uk/content/ufo/>.

BLT

This is Leo the African lion, Baloo the black bear, and Shere Khan the Bengal tiger. The threesome was rescued as babies from the basement of an Atlanta drug dealer’s home when it was raided by authorities. They were starving, traumatised, and had bacterial infections.



Since then, they were brought to Noah’s Ark Animal Sanctuary in Georgia, USA, where they’ve lived in the same habitat together for 13 years. The only time the three were separated was when Baloo was sent for surgery – while at the drug dealer’s home, Baloo had been mistreated so profoundly that the harness that was put on him had grown into his skin.

The two large cats were distraught and cried for the bear’s return when he was at the vet’s. Since then, no one has separated the group. They had clearly bonded during their earliest memories, and never wanted to be apart. Now they live together as if they were brothers of the same species. They play together, nuzzle one another, and are extremely affectionate.

The trio are fondly referred to as BLT, standing for bear, lion, and tiger. Rather than the Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato that BLT usually refers to, these three might just be the most adorable sandwich ever!

Until one has loved an animal, a part of one’s soul remains unawakened.

Anatole France

Survey confirms health benefits of pets

A total of 97% of doctors believe there are health benefits to owning a pet, according to a new survey by the Human Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI).

The 28-question online survey of 1000 family doctors and general practitioners explored doctors’ knowledge, attitudes and behaviour regarding the human health benefits of pets.

Among the key findings were: most doctors have successfully worked with animals in medicine; doctors overwhelmingly believe there are health benefits to owning pets; the majority of doctors have recommended a pet to a patient; and most doctors have seen their patients’ health improve as a result of pet ownership.

HABRI Executive Director Steven Feldman said “The science shows that pets can help with a wide range of health conditions – from heart heath to depression to PTSD”. Feldman added “HABRI hopes that this survey will help break down the barriers and get more doctors and their patients talking about the important, scientifically-validated health benefits of pets”.

For more information see: <http://www.habri.org>.



EASE
15 Rectory Close
Essendon, Hatfield
Herts AL9 6HG

www.ease-animals.org.uk
email: mel@ease-animals.org.uk