Musings from Rochelle Lesser, at the land of the Golden Obsessed

What a special day it was. May 31, 2012. Alfie’s 13th birthday. So wonderful, really, because our family had never gotten beyond the age of 10 with any Golden Retriever kid.

Ollie (shown below from his pharmaceutical company photo shoot) made it to 10 and Darcy to 9. With both losses to cancer, it was a real blow. But, Alfie is the energizer Bunny that just keeps on ticking. And, we are beyond thankful for every day that Alfie graces us with his lovely smile.

It definitely feels like the land of the old, though, at our house, between myself, my hubby, and an almost 20-year-old Cindy Cat.

It seems like forever since the foundation has published a newsletter. Sadly, much of the time has been taken up with trying to figure out how to keep our doors open. As a very small, 100% volunteer run nonprofit, we are simply not attracting any donations. And, our store, which years ago seemed to be flourishing, now barely manages one sale a day.

Yet, we continue to fund $1,000 cancer treatment grants for deserving working dogs, and will do so as long as we are able. A recent raffle, which received a major boost from Facebook, allowed us to raise enough to fund 6 dogs’ treatment. Incredible!

Love this boy. Love this face. Love this joy.

Part of our foundation’s original mission was to bring the amazing story of Carolyn Scott and Golden Retriever Rookie to the big screen. A story exemplifies the Human-Canine Bond like no other, this goal remains. And, we are trying to plan for a marketing campaign for the film that includes a 2012 debut.

We have updated our foundation’s logo, created a jewelry line to celebrate our LIVE LOVE LAUGH theme, and turned our Gotta Dance logo in a stunning pendant. And, a big open house and film premier viewing party is now in the works. And, everyone is invited. Come learn more inside . . . . .
Celebrating the Human-Canine Bond
Carolyn with Rookie . . . Hand and Paw Together

The Land of PureGold Foundation, based in Owings Mills, Maryland, is having their first open house in early November to debut the Gotta Dance film, a film that tells the story of Carolyn Scott and her Golden Retriever Rookie.

From the cut that we have seen from our director, Dan Phillips, we can only say it is going to be truly FABULOUS.

The DVD and Blu-Ray versions will have special director cuts, Carolyn & Rookie's routines in their entirety, and film of University of Minnesota and Dr. Modiano, Director of the Animal Cancer Care and Research Program, College of Veterinary Medicine (http://bit.ly/drmodd).

Want to attend? Simply contact us. Those in attendance will be: served food and drink, have petting time with Golden Alfie (of course), and meet folks involved with the film.

The party will also include viewing the film's premier, which will be playing on two large screen TVs in our home, and the home of the Land of PureGold Foundation. DVDs will be on hand and provided free of charge with a $50 donation to the foundation.

Strengthening AND Lengthening The Bond
Our foundation has been quite passionate about wanting to both strengthen and lengthen the human-canine bond. And, that is why our funding of Dr. Modiano's comparative oncology research is so critical. It is also why we wanted him to be involved in our Gotta Dance project.

Comparative oncology involves the study of cancers that occur similarly in companion animals and humans. Did you know that dogs and humans are the only two species that develop lethal prostate cancers? And, the breast cancer that affects dogs spreads to bones, just as it does in women? Further, osteosarcoma, which is the most frequent bone cancer of dogs, presents in the same way as it does for our teenagers. In fact, under a microscope, cancer cells from a teenager with osteosarcoma are indistinguishable from a any breed dog's bone cancer cells.

Researchers have discovered a genetic cancer link between dogs and humans. Dr. Jaime Modiano and Dr. Matthew Breen collaborated on this research study. They found that humans and dogs share the same genetic basis for certain types of cancer. Furthermore, the researchers say that because of the way the genomes have evolved, getting cancer may be inevitable for some humans and dogs.

Humans and dogs have been partners for thousands of years, and our canine friends may just hold the answers in the fight against cancer.

In the Beginning
We came to know Carolyn Scott in 2001 when she sent us a video of her moving Grease performance. We had it rendered digitally, posted it to YouTube, and the rest is history as this clip went viral. Today, it continues to circulate the world, bringing joy to so many.

There is a powerful message in the life-affirming joy and inner radiance that Carolyn and Rookie exude, as our film displays the restorative miracles that can abound through the embodiment of the human-canine bond.

This documentary, however, is NOT a story about canine freestyle. Rather, it is a courageous story of inner strength and survival, as Carolyn continues in a sense to dance for her life. Enduring her fears without relinquishing that important capacity to rejoice, she is buoyed by Rabbi Hillel's words, "I get up. I walk. I fall down. Meanwhile, I keep dancing."

Paralyzed due to childhood polio at the age of four years, and additionally diagnosed with a significant heart disorder, Carolyn has suffered much physical and psychological pain. And, today, she suffers from the after effects of her initial polio and treatments, evidencing Post Polio Sequelae. This has resulted in Carolyn's no longer competing in the ring or providing freestyle workshops worldwide.

The film captures Carolyn and Golden Rookie's journey, hand and paw together, moving from fear to freedom, and so inspiring the lives of all whom they have touched.

Feedback about Carolyn and Rookie's Bond
"In 1992, I was critically injured in a motorcycle accident. At that time, I was exposed to rehab, therapy, pet therapy, etc. Prior to the accident, I too used to love to dance. Due to the leg injury I sustained, I can't really dance anymore. Perhaps this is why I find your routine SO moving!"

"Carolyn and Rookie certainly made the most of the time and space that they had [on The Jane Pauley Show]. They produced a BIG effect that was way out of proportion to the cramped quarters. I even saw a couple of people in the audience wiping their eyes. That was nice; it made me feel less the idiot for sitting here sobbing over a tiny TV segment" — Judy and Jacob

A Representation of the Bond
The title, Gotta Dance, is both literal and figurative in meaning. While clearly applicable for our talented canine freestylers, the intent is far more encompassing. The embodiment of The Bond, where the dance of human and canine is possible, is all about listening for the music, as we attempt to communicate and relate better together.

That ability to truly dance with dogs is one we all strive for, and is aptly represented in the unique Gotta Dance logo above.

This logo has been turned into a gorgeous gold pendant and pin, and is perfect for all the dog lovers out there. What a great way to support the foundation as well as show your love for the bond.

Please come learn more about this special duo and how you can support our foundation's mission: http://gottadancefilm.com.
Foundation Working Dog Cancer Treatment Grants are $1,000 per individual working dog in the U.S. or Canada, reimbursements provided directly to treating veterinary personnel. Applicants must be active working dogs, in the areas of assistance, detection, search & rescue, enforcement, or military work.

As of July 2012, we have helped 33 deserving dogs with their treatment. Here are two of our latest grant recipients.

Hearing Dog Chewy (shown on right) has been active for years working by the side of Sally Richards. Sally contacted us in April 2012 about obtaining a Cancer Treatment Grant for her 10-year-old Chewbacca, or Chewy for short. A German Shepherd/Collie mix, he has helped Sally since 2002 with her total hearing loss as a result of Neurofibromatosis 2.

Chewy alerts to the fire alarm in the home if Sally leaves food cooking and it begins to smoke and burn. He alerts to knocking or bell ringing at the front door. Chewy also helps when they are out walking and someone is nearing, thus alerting Sally that people are coming toward them.

Chewy was diagnosed with Anal Gland Carcinoma and the prognosis is ultimately poor given his age and Sally's decline of chemotherapy and radiation. She has opted for a more holistic integrative medical regimen that will hopefully give him a good quality of life. We certainly are hoping for that as well.

Meet Sensory Overload, Seizure Response, Brace Dog Pebbles. Golden Pebbles has been active for years working by the side of Sally Taniguchi. Sally contacted us in February 2012 about obtaining a grant. Click here to download a PDF relaying Sally's and Pebble’s story.

Pebbles was diagnosed with Stage III (multiple skin sites) Multifocal Mast Cell Tumors. The tumors have been removed and she is currently receiving the chemotherapy agent, Palladia. Although now semi-retired, a new service dog being trained to help, she is the first line of defense in noisy crowded situations.

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, And sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all. —Emily Dickinson

The important thing is not that we can live on hope alone, but that life is not worth living without it. —Harvey Milk

There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something tomorrow. —Orison Swett Marden

Hope never abandons you, you abandon it. —George Weinberg

Hope is a song in a weary throat. —Pauli Murray

One should be able to see things as hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise. —F. Scott Fitzgerald

We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope. —Martin Luther King, Jr.

The natural flights of the human mind are not from pleasure to pleasure but from hope to hope. —Samuel Johnson

Hope is like a road in the country; there was never a road, but when many people walk on it, the road comes into existence. —Lin Yutang

Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us. —Samuel Smiles

Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; but remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for. —Epicurus

Hope is a waking dream. —Aristotle

Long live blue spaces where hope is a kite and dreams really do come true. —Anonymous

Above featured in our Hope Cards
Until Tuesday
... a story of strength and purpose

Published on May 3, 2011 by Hyperion, Until Tuesday: A Wounded Warrior and the Golden Retriever Who Saved Him, was written by Former Captain Luis Carlos Montalván, with Bret Witter.

Both Tuesday and Luis are shown—warts and all—struggling to heal their invisible wounds, and it is their shared battle that is so illuminating.

“We aren’t just service dog and master; Tuesday and I are also best friends. Kindred souls. Brothers. Whatever you want to call it. We weren’t made for each other, but we turned out to be exactly what the other needed.”

UNTIL TUESDAY provides a genuine peek at the conflicting practices and philosophies behind the training of our invaluable service dogs. And, it reveals what living with a post traumatic stress disorder is really like, not how it is fictionalized in the media. Seeing the effects of the war, PTSD, and TBI through a brave captain’s eyes is an experience we all can learn from.

It is not easy to explain invisible disabilities, such as PTSD and TBI, to others, so accounting for the attacks and suspicions of malingering that Luis endures. Made afraid to show growth or an ability to get better— as accommodations or benefits could then be questioned—a Catch-22 type dilemma results.

For someone now more comfortable in solitude, Luis Carlos Montalván’s current path in advocacy for the disabled remains a challenging one. And, certainly, the new life that he is carving out, with Golden Tuesday by his side, is merely a work in progress. Yet, it is one that I am hoping does have that dreamed-about happy ending.

There is much familiarity with stories such as this one given my many years championing the bond. And, yet, I have never experienced such clarity or honesty, as Luis and Tuesday’s strengths and vulnerabilities are laid bare for all to experience.

Luis Carlos Montalván, a highly decorated seventeen-year veteran, never backed down from a challenge during his two tours of duty in Iraq. Even after suffering stab wounds, a traumatic brain injury [TBI] and three broken vertebrae, he chose to ignore his constant pain. Instead, he remained leading his men at a dangerous Iraq-Syria border post.

It was only when Luis returned home that his physical disabilities, agoraphobia, and crippling post traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] began to take their toll. Doubting that he would ever recover, there were even contemplations of suicide.

Sadly, this kind of destructive thinking is quite prevalent, as eighteen veterans a day commit suicide—more having done so since the start of the wars than have been killed by the enemy.

By chance, while surfing the web, Luis happened to discover that veterans with physical or psychological wounds could apply for a free service dog. It was then that he met Golden Retriever Tuesday.

I have been following Luis & Tuesday’s story since July 2009. My article, Mitigating a World of Hurt—Psychiatric Service Dogs Stepping up to the Challenge, details the increased emphasis of such dogs in the media given the fact that 300,000 veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan have been diagnosed with severe depression and PTSD.

Working with Goldens since 1987, my bookshelves are overflowing with animal themed books and media.

At our Foundation’s website you can find my favorites. The categorized listing includes items in my possession, or from recognized authors I’ve come to trust.

Categories include the following: bereavement, cancer, children & dogs, canine sports, performance dogs, general & holistic health, massage, diet & nutrition, clicker training, assistance dogs, human-canine bond, hospice care, detection dogs, tracking & trailing, travel, puppy life & training, physically disabled dogs, blind & deaf dogs, problem solving, anxiety & fears, search & rescue, senior dog care, and understanding our dogs.

Just visit: store.landofpuregold.com/books.htm!
PET PEEVES

By Dr. V of pawcurious.com fame

We all know that pets are not small humans in fur.

My friend Dorian at Catster pointed out a rather mean-spirited post over at Huffington Post entitled, “Pet Parents are NOT Moms.” I am trying to give the author the benefit of the doubt here; maybe she intended it to be sort of tongue in cheek. She starts by pointing out all the sometimes over the top things we do in the name of love- and I get that, been there, bought the membership card- but the overall tone of the post just skewed off left and went straight to mean. And that just rubs me the wrong way.

I don’t know if Susan Maushart requires one to provide their credentials before pontificating on motherhood, but just to be sure, yes, I have human kids as well as some furry ones. I still refer to myself as Brody’s mom. I like that better than owner, though that works too. I go back and forth. I guess that makes me a monkey (though I would prefer to be referred to as a great ape.)

I need to make one thing clear: We all know that pets are not small humans in fur. They are, in fact, dogs, or cats, or ferrets or whatever. We relate to them differently than we do humans. I have yet to meet one person, and I’ve met a lot of people, who seem unclear on that distinction. Even the ones who dress them up because it makes them happy- yes, even those people know that it is an animal in a dress and not a human. So what? It’s not hurting you. The day I see one of those people wheeling the said dress-wearing cat into the pediatrician’s office for an MMR, then we’ll talk. Who cares if someone relates to their pet in a maternal way and wants to call them their kid?

Maushart’s main reason, as far as I can tell, for objecting to calling pets kids is “you and I both know that pets are stupid.” Is that the only criterion? Because I have to tell you, and this is confidential, but I’ve met a lot of stupid kids too, the kind who show up with peanuts lodged in their nostrils or pencils shoved through their eardrums because they want to know what lead sounds like. If I were to fall unconscious on a railroad track, for instance, this is the only eight year old I want by my side.

So who anointed Maushart Grand Vizier of the Ministry of Motherhood anyway? And what are the membership requirements exactly? Is it as strict as, “you must have birthed a human child from your own loins, and the child must then be smart, and raised on organic produce after you’ve nursed him for four years”? Oh yes, those moms are a blast to be around.

Motherhood is not a black and white concept. It just isn’t. I’ve spoken with adoptive mothers, who have shed tears when their child was asked who their “real” mom was. I’ve hugged women who have wept after a miscarriage and been told, “Well, you don’t get to celebrate Mother’s Day, you’re not a mother.” That hurts. It hurts because they felt that bond, regardless of whether or not you were empathetic enough to acknowledge it.

Some people, like me, have pets and kids. Some have pets instead of kids, because they don’t want them, haven’t gotten around to it, or maybe they can’t. I had clients once who were unable to have children of their own. They shared this freely when they brought in their Akitas, and laughed as they told me, “Bonnie’s our only child.” And was she ever.

Bonnie was involved in an accident. I have never seen two people so devastated. For a month, she was in the hospital, and for a month, her mother came in. I watched as she rotated her to keep her lungs inflated, massaged her legs to keep the musculature from contracting, listened to her whisper in her ear as she stroked her fur in order to get a happy thump of the tail. Every day she came in, and nursed Bonnie.

And when she unfortunately died, I leaned over Bonnie’s mom as her head was buried in her motionless chest, put a hand on her shoulder, and whispered, “Calm down. It’s not like you’re a real mom.”

Oh wait. I didn’t. Because I’m not that cruel. Couch it however you want in smug roly-eyed condescending cheekiness, that post was mean.

So wear your Mom badge proud, moms of the world, and if anyone tries to tell you otherwise, pity them.

Because one day their kid will roll their eyes at them and tell them they hate them and do all sorts of other pleasant human-child behaviors, while yours will lick you on the face and pull your body off the railroad tracks.
Advanced Vapor Technologies Offers Proven, Effective Method for Protecting Pets from Canine Parvovirus Disease

By Randy Zielsdorf

Canine parvovirus, an extremely contagious disease, is currently the most common infectious disease affecting dogs in the US. Advanced Vapor Technologies, LLC of Everett, Washington offers a proven, effective method for killing C. parvo without toxic chemistries.

While dogs older than one year typically do not contract C. parvo, puppies are especially vulnerable, as are unvaccinated dogs. Infected dogs shed large amounts of the virus in the first two weeks after exposure, so protective measures and thorough surface disinfection are needed to protect uninfected animals.

C. parvo is widespread, hard to destroy and persists in an environment that has not been properly cleaned and disinfected. Indoors, the virus can be viable for up to one month. Outdoors, it can last in shaded areas for seven months and sunny areas for five months. It is also resistant to many household disinfectants. (Note: Though the use of bleach is common in kennel environments, it can be toxic, corrosive and has been linked to asthma in humans and reproductive problems in dogs.)

A safe and yet effective approach for dealing with this problem is the TANCS® equipped steam vapor sanitation system. Steam vapor cleaning employs low-pressure (15-20 PSI) steam ranging from 215-230 degrees to clean, sanitize and deodorize a variety of surfaces more thoroughly than traditional cleaning methods. New technology in steam vapor systems, Thermal Accelerated Nano Crystalline Sanitation (TANCS®) converts ionic minerals in tap water into millions of energized nano-crystals that enable steam vapor to quickly destroy the C. parvo virus.

TANCS® is an ideal solution because it adheres to Green Cleaning principles, can sanitize carpets and non-colorfast items in addition to hard surfaces, and offers labor and cost savings. It also protects residents, workers, pets, and indoor environments from chemical exposure, and uses only a little water, reducing dry time. Steam vapor also penetrates areas that traditional cleaning methods cannot reach.

Most importantly, studies and tests have shown that steam vapor cleaning using TANCS® sanitizes surfaces at a higher effective level than traditional cleaning and is a proven method for killing microbes. In tests done by Microbiotest and Nelson Laboratories for Advanced Vapor Technologies, a 7-second application of TANCS® resulted in a 5-7 log reduction of a number of organisms, including, Canine parvovirus and the Avian Flu virus.

With the highly infectious and hardy C. parvo-virus ever present, pet owners and those in the pet industry must be careful in ensuring pet environments are clean and sanitary. TANCS® steam vapor is an easy, safe, efficient and cost-effective way to protect residents, workers, pets, and the indoor environment.

ABOUT ADVAP

Seattle-area based Advanced Vapor Technologies (AVT) provides state-of-the-art steam vapor sanitation systems that enable deep cleaning and disinfection without harmful or corrosive chemicals. With scientifically-proven TANCS® technology carrying an EPA establishment number, AVT TANCS steam vapor units have been tested and proven to disinfect surfaces in much less time and with greater safety and efficacy than typical EPA-registered chemical disinfectants.

Author: Randy Zielsdorf, Advanced Vapor Technologies, gives seminars on creating healthy environments.

Now, here’s a product to lower exposure to toxins for the ENTIRE family — furry or not.

Chemical-free vapor steam cleaning with TANCS®... Cleaner + Safer + Greener

We have been searching and searching for years now for the best steam cleaner, one that will affect health as well as clean. And we are thrilled that we finally found a product that truly stands above all of the rest.

There is no need to even mention the many steam cleaners on the market, or even the steam vapor cleaners. And, there are many. But, the reason is this: it would be like comparing apples and oranges.

We learned about Health Intentional Cleaning, only available through Advanced Vapor’s TANCS® systems. Using roughly a quart of tap water per hour, their quiet, portable multi-purpose appliances create a high-heat, low-moisture vapor that thoroughly removes contaminants and leaves any surface free of chemical residue. ONLY Advanced Vapor’s TANCS® system is backed by solid research.

Chuanwu Xi, PhD, Assistant Professor in the Department of Environmental Health at the University of Michigan and his research team found that treated steam from a novel steam disinfection system utilizing TANCS® technology rapidly kills highly resistant biofilms with greater than 99.95% killing efficiency in a 3 second treatment, and to a non-detectable level in a less than 10 second treatment. “Scientific studies have found that biofilms can be up to 1000 times more resistant to biocide inactivation than are suspended microbes,” said Dr. Xi. “It is extremely difficult to get rid of biofilms and kill them.”

“The efficacy of the steam vapor system is important because even strong chemical disinfectants such as bleach when allowed 20 minutes of dwell time did not achieve the same degree of kill that the TANCS-equipped unit accomplished in three seconds. This device is one of the very promising technologies that combine both rapid physical dispersal and disinfection functions. The dry steam generated can easily break the barrier of biofilm structures and kill cells inside the biofilms. It also does so without polluting the environment or risk of creating antibiotic-resistant bacteria.” Learn more:

http://store.landofpuregold.com/ladybug.htm
We promote holistic health, organic and chemically free living, responsible dog care, and respectful and consistent training practices. Providing materials on canine cancers, our foundation educates others about more preventative courses of action to maintain a healthy and strong immune system. With a volunteer board membership that includes renowned veterinarians, Dr. Allen Schoen and Dr. Marty Becker, our public 501(c)(3) charitable organization allows donations to be tax-deductible. And, few causes are more gratifying than helping those who are facing a diagnosis of cancer. Through these donations, online store, and educational media development, we fund cancer treatment for working dogs and research in comparative oncology, the study of cancers that occur similarly in companion animals and humans. Check us out at landofpuregold.com!

Thanks for your support —
Rochelle Lesser, Founder

Earth Friendly Pet Products

Environmentally friendly (also eco-friendly, nature friendly, and green) are synonyms used to refer to goods that are considered to inflict minimal or no harm on the environment. To make consumers aware, the products may be marked with eco-labels. But because there is no single standard for this concept, these labels are too vague to be meaningful.

So, look for those businesses dedicated to sustainable fair trade principles, and that use organic, dye-free, and/or reclaimed materials.

One such company is Conscience Pet and their product, Cruncherz, is simply fabulous. This treat uses the berry, buckwheat, for their biscuits. Handmade in the USA, these gluten- & grain-free wonders are made with organic and local ingredients.

Every ingredient in Cruncherz treats is there for a reason. Buckwheat is high in magnesium and has a complex array of amino acids. Ginger helps aid in digestion and inflammation in the joints. Chamomile and lavender help to provide a sense of calm, while sage is an herb that has been clinically proven to aid in cognitive function. Pumpkin is full of fiber & antioxidants, and the blueberries provide a bounty of anthocyanins, while honey plays host to an amazing amount of minerals. The cold-ocean kelp (from the North Atlantic Ocean) contains dozens of micro-nutrients that land-living beings need to thrive.

Find these great treats and more at: store.landofpuregold.com/sogood.htm.

Recommended resource links

- cancer.landofpuregold.com — Becoming Cancer-AWARE
- ccr.cancer.gov/resources/cop — NCI Comparative Oncology Program
- www.askdryin.com — Leadership without Force from Dr. Sophia Yin

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