

THE BALTIMORE EXPERIENCE

Upon the Loss of a Pet... Or Changes In Our Attitudes

Change in some of the attitudes of Lumbee Indians become very evident in modern society. It has been said that "the more things change, the more they stay the same." When it comes to the love Lumbee people have for their dogs, that love remains the same. However, when it comes to the role of the dog and the relationship of that dog to the family, change is very obvious.

I can remember how my father loved, protected and cared for his dogs. But those dogs' value were equated with their ability to work; to earn their keep by helping to feed the family. While pedigree & blood line were through to influence the dogs' ability to hunt, the thing which determined the worth or appreciation of the dog was his/her effectiveness as a hunter. Oftentimes, non-pedigree dogs were "pitted" against the blood line dog with very favorable results and much "kidding."

These dogs belonged. But, they belonged in "a dog's place." They did not belong

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Getting the job done in rural America has never been easy, and it's not easy now. High interest rates and rising fuel costs are chewing up larger and larger hunks of cooperatives' income. New people by the millions are moving into co-op country, and the price of everything it takes to provide reliable electric service to each and every one of them continues to go up. Trucks, utility poles, wire and equipment, for instance, cost twice what they did ten years ago.

And, people in rural America expect the same kind of electric service they'd get in the city. They'll get it. We met the challenge of bringing electricity to the countryside in the first place, and we're meeting today's challenge with hard work and good, old-fashioned American know-how. After all, this is co-op country.



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The Chinese developed the use of paper about 100 B.C.



Peppi enjoyed being photographed.

in the house, and most certainly not in the beds. Food in many families was scarce. Therefore, the dogs ate last and only what was left.

The position of the dog for the urban Lumbee family and some others is that of "pet" and family member. These dogs often sit and sleep in the same areas where the people family members do these activities. Their food come from the dinner table oftentimes at the same time the family eats, in some cases, even before.

Some of these pampered pets prefer special diets and require only certain items cooked in a certain way. In sickness, they command only the best and most expensive medical care.

Such attention, reassures the dog that he/she is indeed another member of the family. After several years of such close relationship, what is the impact on a family when such a pet dies?

Peppi came to live with the Locklears in 1970. He was a runaway from prior owners due to mistreatment. Although he was a pure bred French Poodle, miniature, we never knew much of Peppi's vital stats, such as age and birthdate. The vet estimated his age as two in 1970. This means Peppi was fourteen dog years, equal to ninety-eight in man years.

Peppi was wise, a good watch dog. He did not know but a few tricks. He did respond to conversation. Recently, when Rev. David Hunt was a guest in our home, in

play he called Peppi "Snaggle Tooth" in reference to the dog having been to the dentist. Peppi understood and immediately would not allow Rev. Hunt passage upstairs until the latter apologized. So, Peppi was not only a "best friend," he was a pal.

Peppi was not on the family's health insurance, nor was he a legal dependent. Nevertheless, no cost was spared when the dog's well-being was concerned.

It's not unusual to hear that Indian families have paid hundreds of dollars to purchase or care for a dog. I've

heard of payments up to \$700.00 to bury a dog. These are not "well-off" families. In one case, the family borrowed the money.

Yes, while the Lumbee people might accept change more slowly, transition does come.

Many will argue even that to write and print articles about dogs is a waste of time. Yet, really we are about how change is necessary in order to keep up with a changing society.

Oh yes, about the impact of Peppi's loss, we cried. We miss him very much.



Donavin Bentley shares family couch with Joque, the family pet.

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