

CINDY

Dot and I have always had animals, cats and dogs sometimes both at the same time. After we lost the dog we came out here with we decided no more animals. Our life style was just too hectic for an animal. There were times when we left around six in the morning and didn't return until after midnight. We decided that we just could not leave an animal that long.

After a couple years without an animal we began to make up standards of what kind of dog we would want if we ever got one! These standards were made over a period of two or three years not by sitting down and writing them out but by being lonely.

If I was home and Dot was shopping or visiting someone I would think how much comfort a dog would be (I never seemed to miss a cat though we had quite a few of them). Dot felt the same way when I would be away, especially with our Children and Grand Children all three thousand miles away. So in our lonely time we would imagine what kind of dog we would like and so the evolving of our standards.

One...it had to be free...we would not buy a Dog. Two...It had to be female...they were more loving and did not roam (our personal experience). Three...She had to have been spayed, no puppies around. Four...She had to be house-broken, no messy cleaning up. Five...We preferred a Black Poodle...small because

we would want to take her in the car sometimes.

One Saturday we were at a work day at the Camp. One of the members of the Campo Church asked Dot if she knew of anyone who wanted a dog? The man was not easy to talk with so to encourage him, she asked the five questions. He answered yes to all five of our standards. He must have seen the sparkle in her eyes because he told her about the people he worked for who had this dog. The Husband was the Manager of a Fed-Mart store and he was being transferred to another area. They had another older dog they wanted to keep and they were looking for a good home for this one! He asked if she wanted the dog and he must have caught her slight hesitation. She said, "Our life wouldn't be good for a dog."

Later on that day he caught me and asked if I knew anyone that wanted a nice dog? To be polite I asked our five standard questions? With his five yes answers I didn't know what to say. He must have sensed something in my eyes or voice, he said "You travel a lot why don't you stop and look at the dog." He gave me a card with a name and address on it and then he said, "The owners won't be home because the Real Estate people have an Open House Day...they will let you see the dog."

We didn't have any obligation for that Sunday so I decided that we would go to a Church near the address we had. The dog seemed too good to be free but it wouldn't hurt to see it. We found

the home around two p.m. The Agent wanted to show the house to us and he was dismayed that we only wanted to see the dog.

He pointed to the sliding glass doors and there was the dog we dreamed about. We both knew that dog would not be free! We talked with the Agent but he didn't know anything about the dog. I gave him my card and told him to tell the folks if they really were going to give the dog away we were interested. We asked him to tell them they could call after nine p.m. that evening or tomorrow. On our way home all we could talk about was that dog!

No call that evening...we were dejected. On Monday we waited and waited for the call but there was no call! About two p.m. I began to talk that we should go see who got that beautiful dog. I had my hopes so high I wanted to see that she had a good home. At three p.m. I decided that I was going down and see for sure but Dot thought it was foolish so I said, "I'm going anyway!" Then I heard, "Wait for me!"

The address was about fifty miles away (In California that is the same as saying, it's just across the street.) We talked about that dog all the way. The one thing we were both agreed on was, "If the Lord wanted us to have a dog it was ours for sure."

We arrived at the address in less than an hour. It was a

beautiful home in a very nice neighborhood, lawn and shrubs well cared for. Just the kind of a home for a dog like that. I remembered that we were here yesterday and never noticed the house and grounds. We rang the chimes and told the lady that we saw the dog yesterday and we really liked it and... she raised her hand to stop me in mid-sentence. She said, "Less than a half hour ago our care-taker took the dog for his Missionary friends." We almost shouted together, "We're his Missionary friends!" She laughed and said, "Come in and I'll call him." After the call we asked about the Real Estate Agent? Nothing was said about someone looking at the dog, no card... nothing!

When our friend came, we thanked him and asked him why he took the dog to give to us? He said, "When you both asked the same questions about the dog, I thought you both wanted a dog and this little girl needed someone to love her. You needed each other!" When he left the woman gave us the items that belonged to the dog and Dot asked about her name. Her name was "Iggy Poo" it was all we could do to keep from laughing aloud!

We thanked her and when we got to the car Dot had already decided to call her Cindy Lou because it sounded somewhat like "Iggy Poo" that she was accustomed to! I thought what a big deal it would be at camp with 75 or 80 kids calling each other "Iggy Poo." She was Cindy Lou for awhile until we bonded together... then we dropped the Lou part. When she got into trouble then

she was called, Cindy LOU ! A little black bundle of Love!

We felt this dog was God's Gift to us... she was special!

The one dog we will never forget.

Every night when I would be at home, we would be watching the 10 o'clock news, she would be on the sofa up close to Dot or me until the news was almost over (we don't know how she knew but about the last five minutes) she would get down to the floor. She would stand there facing me with her tiny legs spread a little apart ready to move at the right word.

I would put down the paper...book or magazine and say, "Does anyone...want....togo.....for (she would stand there all a quiver).....about this time Dot would say, " STOP TEASING HER.....WALK." At that word she would dash for the door and wait for me. Our nightly walks went to the same spots to be checked unless Coyotes could be heard, then she would not stray ten feet from me. I always said it was for my protection.

We had a walk every night no matter what time we got home she was ready. Even in the rain...I would have an umbrella and she would run out of the car port, turn to see if I was chicken about getting wet. She usually didn't stay out long on rainy nights. When she had enough she would turn and run home to wait for me to pick up the towel, throw it over her and dry her off.

One fall we planned to vacation back in our home state and I only had two weeks vacation. We decided that Dot and Cindy would go for a month. While they were back there and I was in California, I would call Dot two or three times each week. After we talked a while I would ask about Cindy and Dot would say, "Do you want to talk to her?" I would respond, "Sure put her on." Dot would hold her and put the phone near Cindys ear...as I talked, Dot would tell me that her tail was going a mile a minute, her head cocking from side to side, I could hear her whimpering in recognition of my voice.

Our brother-in-law watched and heard this a couple times and one night he got the phone from Dot and said to me, "You're stupid, why are you talking to a dog on long distance telephone? You're wasting your money!"

"I'll tell you why I talk to the dog on the phone! When I've been away for two or three days and come home, Cindy runs all over house, gets on the arm of the sofa and stands on her hind legs until I pick her up, and she licks my face! Dot never does that."

When I arrived at the airport a few days later I saw Dot running towards me. There were about fifty people watching, she stopped about a foot in front of me, grabbed me by the shoulders, started to jump up and down licking my face. She said, "That's from Cindy, now...this is from me!" When this happened we must remem-

ber that Dot was still young and childlike, she was only about 55 years of age.

Just one more item about Cindy, we had her for eleven years and that is a large portion of our life. Old age began to slow her down, she slept most of the time. Walking or protecting me was no longer a priority, eating was sporadic. Dot and I ignored all this until her sad eyes seemed to say... HELP ME!

We took her to a Veterinarian and he advised that we should have her put to sleep. He said it was painless and in a few minutes it would be all over. We went home and neither one of us wanted to talk about it. After the initial shock we began to see that we were wrong to try to hang on to her. After all we were adults and what we had before us was an adult decision.

We called the Vet. and set a day and time and then he blew our minds...did we want to dispose of the body or did we want him to do it? We hadn't even thought that far...we'll call you back. It took us an hour or more just to consider what we wanted to do. We finally called him back and said we would take care of it. We are adults and we would take care of this detail in an adult fashion. How little we knew!

We chose a spot and I dug a hole, lined it with plastic and Dot gathered Cindy in her arms, too soon we were at the Vets. I don't know where I got the sense to pay in advance, maybe

there was a sign. The Doctor asked if we wanted to go in with her, we both nodded yes. (We were adults, and were going to behave in an adult fashion).

The Doctor prepared the needle and an Assistant held Cindy on the stainless steel table. The Doctor took her leg and felt for the vein. Cindy yiped when he inserted the needle, we both began to cry like babies! He had missed the vein and had to do it all over again, when Cindy yiped again, I had an urge to grab the needle and find a vein on the Doctor.

As he had said, it was all over in a few minutes...we cried all the way home and while we buried her. We had agreed that we would not mark the grave in any special manner. We did need a rock...not to mark the grave, just so the Coyotes would not dig her up! I went to find a rock and when I found just the right one and returned, Dot already had a bouquet placed on the spot. To this day I don't know how I had the strength to carry the rock to protect the grave from Coyotes.

For days Suse and I could not look at each other without crying. Then we began to thank God for showing us in flesh and blood what unconditional love was all about. Cindy loved us that way and that is the way God Loves Us!