

January 1, 2003 Issue

## They Live Among Us



As I look back on the year just past, it is difficult not to dwell on the negatives. The economy was sluggish for nearly the entire nation, The Harbor Gallery, Depoe Bay, Oregon, that so reliably represented me for twenty years, closed its doors. It was with sadness and regret that I said goodbye to them as business associates (However, we plan to stay in touch as friends.). Just before Christmas, a life-long friend succumbed to the ravages of cancer. The peace of the circumstance is that she is now with Jesus in Paradise. On the positive side of the art, new opportunities have opened up, with the internet, and contacts in the publishing field. I continue to paint with pastel, oil, watercolor and gouache, and who knows what new media will present itself. (Ever heard of digital art?) Welcome 2003! The door is wide open, come on in!

Next Issue: A Trek To Florida Lighthouses

You don't have to have grown up on a farm to appreciate domestic creatures, but it helped me as an adult artist, to understand the foibles and virtues of the animals that live among us, and to be able to transfer that knowledge onto canvas and paper. On the eighty acres my father farmed in north-central Wisconsin, we had cattle and horses, sheep and pigs, chickens and geese. There were the working dogs, and the (working?) cats. I loved the barnyard denizens with a warmth that radiates from a child who is totally trusting and open. In the hard Mid-west winters, the cows' coats became long and wooly, their faces a mass of silken curls. The horses, too, grew a thick coat to withstand the bitter cold. I recall the puffs of silvery breath, as the horses pulled logs for the fire, out of the wintry forest. Their hooves crunched on the compacted snow, while clumps of pure white bobbed from their fetlocks.

**"There were the working dogs, and the (working?) cats"**

All the animals were given first names. There was Bamm, the big ram, and Porker, the pig. Shorty was a favorite hen, and Peck, was the mean-old-rooster. I don't recall if we named them for their personalities, or if the name came first and they lived up to it. They were all unique "characters". Lance was my sister, Ginger's, pinto horse. He was gentle and shy, with liquid brown eyes, that on some occasions appeared to be full of wisdom, sometimes mischief. Dad's horse was Joe. He was big, strong and loved to work. Mostly he pulled the wagon for hayrides, but he was the one who "bucked " out the timber from the woods.

I have always wanted to paint the

kinds of animals that I grew up with. When I learned pastels, the opportunity was presented to do just that. Pastel, as I have said before, is quick and relatively clean and the results immediate. The media is perfect for me to render the soft fur, the delicate feathers, or the flowing hair of the domestic creatures I know so well.

**"...a lovely young lady...has a delightful plethora of porcine personalities."**

In recent years, my travels have taken me to view exotic pets as well as familiar ones. One fine woman I know, raises peacocks and peahens. She reared an injured weasel from infancy to adulthood. She also has horses and cows on her ranch. I met a lovely young lady from Oregon, who has a delightful plethora of porcine personalities. There are always dogs and cats in my life. I have a pair of turtle doves, and my dear friend in Troutdale, Oregon keeps a parrot, which, undoubtedly, will be a subject for a portrait in the near future, ("Joey" is her Yorkshire Terrier.) She also has two personable cats, Sara and Albert. There certainly are other kinds of animals that have become pets to mankind, or tamed for toil. (Elephants and water buffalo come to mind.) The year 2003, will find me at the easel, pastel stick in hand, with the image of a domestic creature taking form in front of me. If man can tame it, I can paint it.

*Carol Thompson*

## Featured Artwork

**A Pair O' Piglets**



"As the warm summer sun pokes through the barn doors, 'a pair o' piglets' prepares to settle down for an afternoon nap. One more twist of the tail and its siesta!"

**Joey**



"Joey is a Yorkshire Terrier. He thinks he's a kangaroo. He thinks he's a dancer. He thinks he's a torpedo. He thinks he's a marathon runner. He thinks he's very, very smart! He is! He is all that and more."

**Old Rooster**



"He has lived a good life. As he gets on in age the 'spurs' on his legs grow long. His proud head bows and his elongated tail feathers fan in the slightest breeze. He is an 'old rooster' in his golden days."