



August 2007 • Volume 40 | P.O. Box 656, Carstairs, Alberta T0M 0N0 | Phone 403-337-2800 | Fax 403-337-2418 | Email pat@pasu.com | www.pasu.com

Karma!

As a little boy I grew up in a Kloof, a relaxed and quiet little town situated on the high hills overlooking the seaport of Durban. The cool sea breezes made the subtropical climate far more bearable at this altitude.

This was in the early fifties and in those days all the properties were well over an acre in size, well spaced and often separated by native trees and bush. The bird life was abundant and some of the birds quite stunning. Apart from snakes, cats and the occasional mongoose it was an avian paradise. We all lived and let live.

Then on my tenth birthday, to the chagrin of my Father, a rich aunt gave me a superbly engineered German made air rifle. I remember it well. It was a Geckado number two and it was both powerful and accurate. In reality it was a sad day for the beautiful birds for that gun in the hands of a wild, bush-loving, prepubescent little hellion was an utter disaster for the birds.

As I write this I am filled with remorse and loathing for the carnage and I can hear my Father appealing to me not to shoot birds and that one day I would regret my actions. He said that our actions had to be accounted for and we would pay for them either in this lifetime or the next. I dismissed this as being piffle dust. He was a gentle spirit and believed in being in tune with the planet and practiced yoga long before it became a hysterical fashion fad for the Lola Granolas. Dad wanted to be a vegetarian but my Mother who was a Catholic was terribly threatened by this as she saw in it a slide into paganism and probably imagined my father exchanging his suit for a loin cloth and a garland of flowers as he strolled about with hands together in the Hindu salutation. I think my father would have loved to do that and he would have been an excellent yoga swami. Mind you he did admit that when he was a little boy and lived on the Island of Mauritius they made sling shots and shot birds to the consternation of his Dad. So there seems to be some genetic repetition here.

As I revisit those days there was one poignant moment that I remember with stark clarity. After having tired of

shooting tins I made the conscious decision to shoot a bird. I went up to the mulberry tree which was filled with little finches gorging on the abundant fruit. I selected a target, aimed, shot and killed a bird. As I saw the little creature topple forward, momentarily hang on with one claw, a drop of blood forming on its beak before it fell to the ground, I was filled with horror, remorse and anguish. The bird was given a Christian burial together with a cross and many pious incantations to the Lord above to save my soul and forgive me for this awful deed. I promised myself never to do such a thing again.

Then my cousin, who was about five years older than me and a devoted role model, came to visit for a few weeks. He commandeered the pellet gun and demonstrated the art of unrestrained hunting and killing and I so much wanted to be like him. I imitated him to perfection and killed ruthlessly. The only ones benefiting from this carnage were the African servants who roasted the birds and ate them.

One day I received a letter in the mail. There was a colourful cut out picture of a bird pasted on the top of the page and few typed words that said if I continued to shoot birds I would be reported to the S.P.C.A. I was so concerned and afraid that my parents would find out about this letter that I destroyed all evidence of it and put the gun away for good. That letter came at the right time. I was beginning to notice that the local girls were metamorphosing and developing interesting shapes. So I began bird watching, a pastime that I still avidly enjoy to this day. In retrospect I wonder if my father sent that letter?

Forty years later I was given a Moluccan Cockatoo. I had for some time wanted a parrot and I just happened to be in the right place and the right time. Peaches was a distressed eight-year-old bird needing a good home. The lady relinquished the bird to me after I had solemnly promised to look after it diligently for the rest of my life. This singular incidence in my life has taught be three great lessons. The first is I now know how to distinguish between a need and a want. The second is to research

fully before you make a decision that will affect the rest of your life. The third I shall discuss later.

Peaches was indeed a distressed bird. In her eight years she had had at least four or five homes and had not known any lasting relationships. She had plucked all the feathers out of her tail, most of the flight feathers in her wings and selected patches on her body. This little sentient being had very little self esteem and would often hide in a corner calling herself a "bad bird". Her report with humans had led her to distrust their intentions and she would often bite with no provocation. The Moluccan beak is designed to rip and tear away at wood. They can use it with infinite care and tenderness or it can use it with devastation on human soft tissue. My ears and other parts of my body can attest to the fact that it's not a nip but rather a mutilation with a lot of pain and screaming. During the nine years and eight months that I have had her the bites have become less frequent and fortunately now rarely occur.

I have now done the research. First of all, parrots belong to a large family called psittacine. Cockatoos are a species within the group and the Moluccan originates in Indonesia. Of all the birds I could have chosen this is the most demanding and difficult to keep. Why? Because they are astoundingly intelligent and in the wilds they have a complex and highly evolved social structure. They reach puberty between their seventh and ninth year, court and select partners based on personality compatibility and commit to a lifetime relationship. Furthermore, they have more cognitive learning than behaviour instincts. For the bird to be healthy and not pluck its feathers it has to have a surrogate partner and cannot be left for extended periods alone. A nine-to-five workday is out of the question. Add to this that it thinks and behaves like a two-year-old and cannot be left alone and unsupervised or else she will chew furniture (antiques preferably) and the fastest beak in the west will destroy anything.

Life at PaSu Farm is complex. The Bird sleeps in a corner of our bedroom which fortunately is large and spacious. There is a little bay area which she and Tucker the Lab share. She has the sound presence of mind to await our actual awakening before she pulls off the sheet covering her cage and joins in the commotion of wake up time. She eats breakfast with us and although we make a practice of not feeding Tucker at the table she robs morsels from our plate, takes them back to the chair that she uses the back of as a perch and feeds them to Tucker. Hence I have a Lab sitting with rapt attention and a goofy grin making up to a bird. During the day she has another cage in the corner of the restaurant from which she can survey the operations in the kitchen and call for a tasty morsel when it is on the table. If she is ignored she will start a crescendo of screams until it is brought to her cage. The long suffering staff have soon learned to react

Shopping Notes *Christmas*

EXTRA SHOPPING HOURS

For your convenience we will be open
in December on Friday nights
for shopping until 8 pm.

The Mondays before Christmas
we will be open from 11 am to 5 pm.
The restaurant will not be open on these Mondays.

OTHER LOCATIONS

As usual we will be at
Northland Village Mall

November & December

Please Note: We will be located in the
same store that we occupied in 2005.

We will not be in North Hill
as in the previous year.

AG TRADE RED DEER

November 7 - 10, 2007

SPRUCE MEADOWS CHRISTMAS MARKET

November 16 - 18 and

November 23 - 25

(Two weekends this year!)

And of course...

CHRISTMAS TRADITION

at PaSu Farm

Years ago, before we had a shop, we used to have an **OPEN HOUSE** at the farm on the weekends in December.

This tradition still continues and we offer

FREE Christmas cake and hot cider

(in the boutique only). Let us take the

stress out of your shopping by pampering

you in a relaxed environment far

from the maddening crowd.

with alacrity the moment she gives her first call. The sort of thing you would hear in the kitchen is someone with a panicky voice, "What is it she wants? Quick, give her the carrots, wait take the spinach as well."

Bedtime is when she chooses. Take her to bed before she is ready or while there is a party going on and the beak will be applied. On the other hand let the phone ring after she has gone to bed and all hell breaks out for at least one hour. If we are going out at night we have to be incredibly sneaky and trick her into her bedroom cage. She goes camping, on holidays and loves car trips.

Can you see where this is going? Karma! What sane and rational persona would do this to himself? That day, when I committed to look after the bird, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. Now I have to split my attention between two demanding beings and balance tense situations as each stakes their claim to disputed territorial rights and privileges. I seldom get it right and I will get heck from one or the other. On the other hand I have learned to respect all of God's creatures especially birds, feathers or no feathers. I am very fond of Peaches and will be true to my commitment. She is a member of our family and understands the structure between children and grandchildren.

So about that third point I wanted to make? The whole thing was engineered. My father's sentiments were right and there is such a thing as Karma. I would not be the least bit surprised if he had instigated this. Thank you for the lesson and may you rest in peace Dad. You have made your point abundantly clear.

Oh, and as for yoga, I think it is a powerful tool if applied correctly and not used as a fashionable money grabbing fad.

Victorian Christmas Dinners

Friday, November 30

Friday, December 7, 14, 21

6:00 pm Cocktails 7:00 pm Dinner

Once again we will present our elegant seven-course plate service English Victorian Christmas Dinner.

The entrée will be a choice of Roast Leg of Lamb or Prime Rib. To create a warm hospitable atmosphere our staff will be dressed in Victorian garb, candles and crackers will be placed on the table and the plum pudding will be flamed for all to see.

\$70.00 per person
includes gratuities & GST.

CHRISTMAS DINNER THEATRES

NEW

Carousel Productions

This year we have changed to a new theatre company and there will be a whole fresh approach to our Christmas Dinner Theatres. Each Saturday night will feature a different play. All are funny and highly interactive.

1st December Heck's Kitchen

It all takes place in the restaurant of Chef Basil Flatleaf in Calgary. Staff shortages, demanding girlfriends, and stress all make the recipe for a murder.

8th December Messed Up Housewives

The perfect new neighbourhood with SUV's, mini vans, groomed lawns and prosperity. But trouble bubbles beneath the surface where there are dark secrets and deep hatred.

15th December Little Homicide on the Prairie

In the town of Chicken Scratch Alberta the banker is rich while the rest of the townsfolk and farmers work their fingers to the bone. Trouble and murder is sure to brew.

12th January First, Do Much Harm

At a hospital fund raiser, everyone hopes that Dr. Lance Carbuncle is going to win the Nobel Prize. But someone is up to blackmail and everyone is tense and nervous. The right atmosphere for murder.

**Cocktails from 6:00 pm
Dinner starts 7:15 pm**

Tickets are \$70.00

includes gratuities on meal, GST and show.
Advance booking and ticket purchase essential.



African Feast

with David Thiaw and Domba

An extravagant selection of wonderful African Food, followed by Music, Stories and Dancing.

Saturday, October 27
Cocktails 6:00 pm Dinner 7:15 pm
Reservations & Ticket Purchase Essential

Tickets \$70.00 per person
Service & GST for meal included

Ladies' Night

*Buffet Dinner, Fashion Show
& Guest Speaker*

Friday, November 2
Cocktails 6:00 pm Dinner 7:00 pm
\$30.00 per person includes Service & GST
Reservations Essential

Sheep Manure

Dress your fall garden with Sheep Manure, ready for the spring and have a few bags in the potting shed for a great mix with potting soil. Phone first to make sure that bags are available or that there is a tractor operator if you are buying by the truck load.

Price \$5.00 per bag
6 bags for \$25.00

From Our Kitchen

Now available. **Frozen soups.** No chemicals or preservatives. **Frozen Lamb Ribs.** Our famous **Scone Mix.** James, chutneys, and preserves. Gourmet essentials.

We will pre-cater whole dinners. A minimum of 24 hours notice is required. It takes the stress out of entertaining!

New Catalogue

Our new catalogue is hot off the press and it is the best we have produced so far thanks to a talented marketing consultant that we now use. If you want one for yourself, or have friends who could use it, please **phone us at 403-337-2800** and we will mail them.

New Products for the Christmas Season

Beautifully made **Sheepskin Coats** are now available. If you are interested, please shop early as supplies are limited.

Also, we have a great selection of **Winter Wear** for all members of the family. Our selection comprises mostly of merchandise made in Canada, South America, Nepal, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, UK, Europe and a few articles from China. Where possible we prefer to support Canada first and then third world country cooperatives.

*Let us do your
Private
Christmas Party*

*We will personalize it
to suit your needs*

