

A LETTER FROM DAVID



“EVERY PERSON NEEDS ONE... A PET!”



SPECIAL CONTEST for Calif. Residents: WIN A LUNCH DATE WITH DAVID! (The winner & parent will be brought to L.A. to meet David in person.) David has been appointed Chairman of the Special Olympics for Retarded Children. Special Olympics is a program for retarded kids that provides opportunities in physical education, sports, & recreation. It's a charity that needs funds & here's how you can help & also win a date with David: Send your name, address, & contribution of \$1 or more to: Calif. Special Olympics, Box 4563, Pasadena, Ca. 91106. INCLUDE A SLOGAN THAT YOU BELIEVE BEST EXPRESSES THE SPIRIT BEHIND SPECIAL OLYMPICS (LIKE: "SPECIAL GAMES FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE"). Entries must be in by July 1, 1973. If you don't live in Calif. & you'd like to make a contribution—look up the address of Special Olympics in your state right now—ok?

Hello there!

Today's topic (are you paying attention?) is something near and dear to my more-or-less tender heart. It has to do with big eyes looking tenderly up at you, companionship no matter how low you may be feeling, and love that never changes or wavers. Obviously, I'm talking about pets!

I've had maybe twenty pets in my life—all the way from the more commonplace kinds (although no specific pet is ever commonplace) like dogs and cats, to more exotic varieties of domesticated four-footers like hamsters and white rats (my mother loved those) and even some domesticated "wingies," like parakeets, and "scalies," like a king snake, and "wetties," like tropical fish. And every single one of them was a joy and an educa-

tion for me!

"But," you may ask, "how much love do you really get from a tropical fish... or a white rat, for heavens' sake?" And my answer to that is, "Well..."

Obviously, no goldfish is going to swim up to you and lick your hand when you come home from a hard day's night... even if you do go right over and put your hand in the water, which would be pretty weird to begin with. But they'll give you a cold fishy eye through that glass when you sit down next to them, and in their odd watery little brains, they know you! (Sam says that they are just looking for food, and they think anything with two legs is going to drop that powdery stuff on the water! I knew those fish a lot better than he did, and they recognized me! I think.)

White rats, on the other hand, really do get to know you by sight. They got to know my mother immediately, and whenever she came into the room they would rattle their teeth against the wire of their cages, and send her in a scurry into the hall. When they saw me, they'd run around the cages, tearing through all that shredded newspaper (why do rats and hamsters like to shred newspaper? Incidentally, mine would never shred the Sunday funnies. Maybe the colored ink tastes bad.) Anyway, they'd run all around through that shredded newspaper in what I thought was joy at my return. And when I held them in my hand, they seemed completely content and not at all afraid. And that's a good feeling!

Dogs, of course, really do love you, in some ways more completely and unconditionally than people do. Some of my best friends have been dogs—and that's no joke! Sam and Sheesh and... well, the list goes on and on. I'll never forget any of them as long as I live.

COMPLETE TRUST

There's something about the look in your dog's eyes that affects me more deeply than almost anything I can think of. Maybe it's the complete trust—trust that you'll always be fair, trust that you can take care of anything, whether it's a hurt paw or injuries from being hit by a car. One of the most indelible memories of my life is the look in the eyes of a dog that lived on our street

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