

The Compassionate Friends Victoria, Australia

267 Canterbury Rd., P.O. Box 171, Canterbury, Vic. 3216

Telephone: 03 9888 4944 Freecall: 1800 641 091 Fax: 03 9888 4900

www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au Email: support@compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au



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REMINISCENCES OF CINDA

The Charming RINGTAIL POSSUM



After we moved into our home in Hurstbridge we observed to our delight that in the evening one of the family of ringtail possums that lives in the roof would come climbing down the tree in front of the kitchen window. After a while we started to leave out an apple and she became quite tame and would sit content for a long time eating, before disappearing into the garden. As well as viewing her through the window, we could go outside and stand very close. She would look at us and continue feeding without any fear. One night, to the sheer joy of the whole family, she came with her baby. As its mother was not frightened, the young one also felt no fear of us. Ringtail possums are shy and gentle animals and it was an enchanting experience.

Some time later the children decided they wanted to name her and so we all suggested names we felt were suitable and put them in a hat and drew one out. Our daughter Chione's suggested name was pulled out and our captivating guest became Cinda. It was a name we all decided we liked anyway. Other ringtail possums also came to feed on the apple, coming quietly one after another and sharing the fruit without fighting or fuss.

We could always tell which one was Cinda though, as the colour markings on her body and tail were very distinctive. Cinda was with us for a few years and had several more young in her life. She gave us great enjoyment and pleasure. Cinda has long since died, but we all have very vivid and fond memories of her and think that of the several other ringtail possums we see and hear in the yard some must be her children.

Having lost our beloved and beautiful daughter Chione some years ago, it is something that we like to believe, as Cinda and her offspring are a connection to Chione and to the precious memories of a more contented time in our lives.

Steven Katsineris,
bereaved father of Chione (14 October 1998)
TCF Vic, Au

“The Crossing”

I have met thee where the night touches the edge of the day;
where the light startles the darkness into dawn, and the
waves carry the kiss of the one shore to the other.
From the heart of the fathomless blue comes on golden call
and across the dusk of tears I try to gaze at thy face
and know not for certain if thou are seen.

Rabindranath Tagore



WHY I FEEL 'BONDED' TO SUNFLOWERS

After Paul died, sleepless nights were usual for me and during one especially difficult night I decided that when morning came I would act on the advice of an elderly friend of mine who suggested I plant some sunflower seeds. She told me that "they carry a good message, in that when they flower they always know that the sun is there even on the cloudiest days, they turn their faces to the sun and their shadows fall behind them." (I knew she was trying to help me in my sadness)

I am not much of a gardener, but I did plant some seeds and watched as the plants grew.

A stormy night came along. I couldn't sleep and longed for daylight to come. When morning came, I looked out the window and could see that overnight the plants had been damaged by wind and rain and one in particular looked so bent and broken that I thought, "it looks how I feel."

I asked Lindsay (my husband and Paul's Dad) to help me help the sunflower plant by putting a support stick in the ground and attaching ribbon on to the stick and plant and we hoped it would survive. I watched its progress daily and as it slowly straightened and became stronger, so did I. It grew into a beautiful flower, admired by many people. Its seeds continue on.

I was amazed at the effect it had on me as it became important to me that the sunflower survived. I also thought about 'support' and how it had helped the plant keep growing. This thought made me think about 'support to people' who feel 'broken and bent'. How blessed we are when support comes along for us and helps us keep on from day to day.

My elderly friend also followed the progress of the struggling sunflower through my long distance friendship with her during so many personal 'cloudy, overcast days.' I will always be so grateful to her for her good advice and both she and I know that the sunflower has, indeed, been a great blessing. I still grow sunflowers. They have become an important part of my life.

Margaret Benson, Burnie, Tasmania
Loved mother of Paul who died 5/6/1992
and loved mother of Luke who died 27/11/1992