



(Chance and Gus, Circa 2001)

Dogtales I - July 18, 1999

I got lots done today, I did. Took the guts out of the toilet in the blue bathroom, and went to Home Depot to get a washer to replace the really weird looking one that was in there, and thought it best to leave Sweet Gus, the friendliest dog in the world, in the house while I was gone for an hour. I walked up to the fellow in the plumbing aisle and he saw immediately what I had in my hand, and said he didn't think anyone carried those washers anymore. He told me where to look anyway and there was one left, so I bought it. Drove 34 miles to spend \$1.53 before tax.

Pulling back into the driveway, I saw at least 8 geese on the back lawn, so I pulled in very slowly, wanting not to disturb them. I pulled into the garage, closed the door behind me and was happy to see through the garage door that they were still roaming about out there. After I carried my \$1.53 prize up the stairs, I saw that Gus was still in the brick room, where it's nice and cool. He had the run of the house, but this weather has made that his favorite spot. Poor, gentle snow dog that he is.

He got up to greet me, and I figured I'd take him out the front door to do his business. He was out there for only a few seconds when his head turned toward the driveway. Off he went. I screamed for him to STAY, but of course he ignored me. He made the corner towards the backyard, and suddenly the International Goose Distress Signal went out. They were pretty upset, let me tell you. I followed as quick as my fat little legs could carry me, and when I made the corner I could see 6 or 7 geese running, as only geese do, toward the pond next door. Gus had gone around between his enclosure and the pool enclosure. Still yelling STAY, even though there was no way he was going to stop now, he ran after his new best friends. I called him, and back around he came, with a goose in his mouth. I screamed OUT, which may or may not have been the reason he dropped it, then I chased him up onto the deck. It was then that I noticed there was one goose left, and it was swimming in the pool. It wasn't long before I noticed that geese, when they are very scared, lose the contents of their bowels. It was obvious there had been more than one goose in the pool when Gus came out to play.

I took the snow shovel out to the yard to dispose of Gus' dead playmate. As I was cleaning the pool, I tried to talk that last goose out of there, but it didn't want to leave. Even when it could have waddled up the steps, it choose to just keep it's distance from me. Even when I came back into the house and looked through my office window, it was still there.

Gus seems proud of himself, and I'm sad about losing a wild animal. I don't know whether he wanted to kill it or not, but he knew he did something wrong when I chased him back to the deck. I'm guessing the survivors will be sitting around the pond at night, with flashlights in their faces, telling Gus stories.

The only good thing about this little story is this... now I know exactly what a wild goose chase looks like.

Dogtales II - February 5, 2000

I want you to know that I went for a swim today, in the pond on the neighbor's property. Perhaps you wonder why I would have gone in the neighbor's pond in early February? Well, Chance (now renamed Stump, because he is as stupid as) wandered away from the front yard tonight, and was not answering Joni's "CHANCE...COME!!!" He's such a good dog. I happened to be driving home from the office, and was only a few minutes away when I called to tell Joni to have dinner ready in 5 minutes... ummm... let me rephrase that,... to tell Joni that I'd be home in a few minutes. She told me she had a problem... that Chance was missing.

As I pulled into the driveway, Joni was standing on the deck listening to what she thought might be Chance whining. So, I walked to the edge of our property, and heard Chance, whimpering and yelping. He was in distress. I figured he was in the pond, so I jumped in the car and pulled into the neighbor's driveway, then trudged through 100 feet of knee deep snow down to the pond, where I saw Chance in the water, hanging on to the edge of the ice, trying to climb out. Not knowing how deep the water was, I turned over an upside down rowboat near the pond, looking for oars I could use to catch his training collar and pull him to me. Too far out. So, I waded into the water and pulled him to the snowy shore. Poor stupid thing was shivering and covered with ice.

By then we were both cold, wet, and tired. He couldn't walk, and I couldn't lift him and walk. After a few minutes of trying, I couldn't lift him at all. I dragged him a ways in the snow, and he did try to walk, but his back end had been under ice water for God knows how long and his back legs just weren't working. I carried him through the snow until I fell, and needed Joni's help to get up. Good thing she had just caught up with us, carrying a coat we would try to use to drag him across the snow. When that wasn't working at all, I tried to cover him with my body for a few minutes, hoping to keep him warm while we rested a few minutes. Then, we both got up and walked, very slowly. Chance was sometimes walking on his own and sometimes I was simply dragging him by his studded training collar. We finally made it back to the driveway. Chance needed a little help jumping into the back of the car, but he made it. Joni had to drive the car back home because my legs would barely move, my back was killing me, and I was out of breath. Since Chance was not ready to walk up the basement stairs, and I was not ready to carry him, I kept him covered with my body and sent Joni to get some blankets. We had him between us on the back seat, with a blanket covering all of us, and the car heater blasting for a good 10 minutes before I thought we could make it up the steps with him.

He had rested and been warmed long enough that he did make it upstairs on his own. We both got down on the floor with him between us to try to warm him up, so he would stop shivering. About an hour later, his breathing was normal and he wanted to eat. He had a lot of trouble getting up, and could barely walk, but he was improving. His back end was still very cold to the touch, so we did more of the warming him up routine. When we were certain he was OK and could walk (gingerly), I glanced at the clock and saw that it was 8:45. I had gotten home at 6:15. We must have spent over an hour out in the snow.

That's the second time I have had to jump into a body of water to save a dog. OK, so the other one was a swimming pool. Which is another story.

Chance appears to be OK, though we will get him to the vet tomorrow.

Gus is pissed that Chance got to ride in the Lexus before he did.

I didn't see any geese down by the pond, but I could swear I heard them laughing. They must have thought Chance was Gus.

And I'm changing that dog's name to Duncie. Or Stump. Something more befitting. I reminded him that dogs are supposed to save people caught in the snow, not the other way around... but I doubt he got it.