

DEATH IN THE RACQUET CLUB CAUSED BY SPEEDING CAR

January 3, 2011

On the evening of January 3, the first Monday of 2011, one of the Racquet Club's finest residents was instantly killed by a speeding car at the corner of Golden Sands and Seascape. Bailey, a two-year old male Chihuahua lost his life doing what he did every day – going for a walk around the neighborhood with his best friend.

Roy Engelbretson, homeowner in the Racquet Club since 1992, liked to think of himself as "Bailey's human". Bailey was Engelbretson's entire family and his best buddy. He would try to walk with Bailey every morning before he left the house for work, and again as soon as possible after returning from work in the afternoon. "Bailey had his routine and he liked to make sure we stuck with it. We were like the Neighborhood Watch patrol at least twice a day – and you could set your watch by us", Engelbretson said.

That fateful Monday was different in a couple of significant ways. First, there was snow on the ground and in the air that morning and Bailey wanted nothing to do with going outside. There was no morning walk that day. Second, it was unusual because Engelbretson had volunteered to work late for his company that day. He arrived home at about 7:30 p.m., several hours later than usual. It had already been dark for some time.

It was a long day at home alone for Bailey and a long and tiring day at work for Engelbretson. According to Engelbretson, he and Bailey were especially happy to see each other that evening. "Bailey gave me one of the best welcome home greetings ever and I was equally so happy to see my little best buddy".

Bailey immediately reminded Engelbretson that it was time to go outside and check the mail. Since all the snow had melted off of the ground Engelbretson decided not to change out of his business clothes, but to make a quick trip with Bailey out to the mail box and then head right back into the warm house for the usual play time, dinner and a little television before bedtime.

After the mail was retrieved, a thrilled-to-be-outside Bailey seemed to automatically launch into his daily walk routine along the curb. A reluctant and tired Engelbretson began tagging alongside. Engelbretson said, "I have always been a soft touch with my pets and tried to accommodate their wants and needs whenever I could". Within seconds of beginning the trip up the dark Golden Sands hill going toward the Seascape curve, Engelbretson said that he realized how unsafe this unplanned walk had quickly become. He said that Bailey blended in with the darkness.

Just then at about 7:40 p.m., the main gate opened and a full-size passenger car turned and gained speed as it headed up Golden Sands. By the time the headlights of the fast moving car were at the Sea Rock intersection, Engelbretson said that he stepped out in the lane of travel and began waving and motioning for the driver to slow down. He wanted to secure the safety of his pet. "There was no noticeable reduction of speed, no sign of brake lights being applied and the driver continued directly toward me at a steady rate of speed", Engelbretson said.

Had Engelbretson not stepped back toward the curb when he did, he is convinced that there would have been a very serious car-pedestrian accident. He remembers shouting at the driver to slow down as it sped by and disappeared around the corner onto Seascape. Engelbretson said that he glanced at the well lit rear license plate of the speeding car and noticed it was the standard Nevada Silver State issue. His focus immediately switched from the shock at what had just happened back to concern for the safety of his beloved Bailey.

Within moments, Engelbretson arrived at the top of the Golden Sands hill and there he spotted Bailey. Crouched down on the pavement, he was right around the blind corner where he always waited for the slower Engelbretson to join him so they could finish their walk home together. Only this time Bailey had been fatally struck by the undercarriage of an automobile.

Many days have passed since that tragic event, and Engelbretson still grieves at the loss of his best friend.

He wanted this true story to be told for a couple of reasons. One is to create awareness about the importance of driving safely within our community and of being courteous to our fellow neighbors. Engelbretson says that "our streets are also our sidewalks and many senior citizens, children, walkers, joggers, pets as well as motor vehicles must all share our streets safely for many purposes".

Finally, it is Engelbretson's hope that Bailey's untimely and tragic death can be a reminder to the residents of the Racquet Club that we are a small community of only 190 homes. We need to look out for one another and be more careful and considerate in the future. He says "If one among us can change an unsafe habit, or if one injury can be prevented or one life can be saved by this tragic event, then Bailey's life will not have been wasted".



In Loving Memory of "Bailey"
December 3, 2008 - January 3, 2011

Footnote:

Since word of this tragedy has gotten out in the neighborhood, several residents have shared their own horror stories of speeding cars and "near misses" at the Golden Sands – Seascape curve as well as other locations within our community.