

# People And Animals Often Act Alike

by Pippin Lowe

I have crossed the Mud Creek bridge on Front Street hundreds of times without seeing more than a few fish and various birds. That all changed one sunny morning when I turned off the trail and entered the street. An elderly couple stood on the east side of the bridge. While the man watched the water, the woman tossed bread crumbs into the air. I figured she was feeding the ducks, as I have often seen water fowl in the area. Ducks are enjoyable creatures to watch, so I decided to stop and enjoy the scene.

It was to my shock and delight to see 11 turtles swimming to and fro in an effort to get as much food as their bellies would hold. A variety of sizes competed for each scrap of bread. Some were better than a foot in diameter, others only 5 inches, but the majority were between 8 and 9 inches. Their bodies, heavy with protective shells, appeared to be swimming in slow motion.

I talked with the couple while taking photos of the water event. It seems several people at the Butterfield retirement community know of the turtles as they have become a favorite for that community. Others from the community later informed me that Panera Bread will donate old bread, when they have it, to people who want to feed these fascinating water creatures.

As the turtles bobbed for the food I decided to continue my walk on the trail, which picks up on the other side of the bridge. Now every time I pass over the bridge I look for turtles and to my surprise I often see one or two in the water. They always swim toward me when they notice I've stopped and, like dogs at the kitchen table, beg for food. I feel a little guilty, like I am teasing them because I never have more than a camera on me, but I tell them to hold tight as I'm sure someone will reward their patience soon.

There are several elements in marketing that mirror the feeding of these turtles. Marketing is in essence an activity of feeding prospective customers the knowledge they need so they will purchase from you. Most businesses, if they never advertise, will either have few clients or will suffer a sluggish growth. In my research, the only businesses in Fayetteville that are doing well which do little to no marketing are liquor and second-hand stores located on a major street. In these cases the busy street location is their marketing tool, for such locations are often more expensive to rent or own

than are off-the-beaten-path buildings. For the rest of the business community, marketing is not optional. The only option is how to create the most visibility with the least amount of money.

The turtles begging when there is no food is similar to a customer's loyalty to a business they have been "fed" by in the past. For them, little to no further marketing is required as long as the business performs in a like manner as previously experienced.

Even the slow, steady mannerisms of the turtle imitate the progress marketing usually emulates. For the most part a continual image of the business before the public is required before the individual will purchase.

Recently I was told there are now 16 turtles at these feedings. So, similar to word-of-mouth marketing the turtle community is getting the word out about the benefits of this location. There is also more talk on the trail between people about the turtles.

The outcome in both feeding the turtles and marketing products creates a win-win event. For the turtles food is given and in return they show themselves, which provides an enjoyable experience to the onlookers. Within a marketing effort a product or service is sold, which benefits the customer while providing a financial gain to the business.

These turtles demonstrate the reality that an incentive can generate a predictable response that is similar to the way people react. The marketer's job is to both understand, then use, an enticement to benefit the business being promoted.