

Paws To Consider

Winter 2007

Fate? Love At First Sight?

By Joan Hughes

Puppies are cute. Almost everyone would agree with that. So when the SPCA has a litter of pups for adoption we expect that they will be adopted quickly, and they usually are. We also expect that the adoption will be for the life of the dog, which might be 15 or more years, depending on breed. Sadly, that's not always the case.

Stryder was one of those exceptions. He was one of a litter born in January, 2003 that came to us in March of that year. He was a furry black bundle best described as a border collie, shepherd, lab mix and was adopted two months after coming into our care. We have an excellent record of placing our dogs in "forever homes" and sometimes a family will adopt a second dog as a companion for the first. But even the SPCA is not infallible. In early 2007 Stryder was returned to us.

Call it fate, karma, destiny--whatever it was, it happened that Jenni Hopkins was at the SPCA adoption event for the first time the day that Stryder came back. Jenni is a friend of long-time volunteer



Stryder

Jill Gorski, and they shared the sad bond of each having lost a beloved dog. Jill's Bandit and Jenni and husband Gary's Sinbad had died within approximately a week of each other. When Jenni saw Stryder she was shocked. His coat was in terrible condition from skin problems that his owner had done little or nothing to resolve, and he was underweight. Jenni couldn't get him out of her mind.

Stryder went to Lisa Reid's kennel and Lisa described him as smart and good with other dogs. A vet diagnosed his condition as a skin allergy. He was treated successfully and came to subsequent adoption events. So did Jenni. She wanted to adopt Stryder but Gary was cool to the idea and somewhat of a hard sell. He was still mourning the loss of Sinbad, his pal for more than 16 years, and that was a void that not even Sophie, their rescued, 10-year-old lab mix, could fill. He just wasn't ready for Stryder.

But never underestimate woman power. Jill

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The SPCA of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit rescue organization. We rely solely on membership dues, donations and various fundraising activities for revenue. Our Voluntary Board of Directors, committee members and volunteers are responsible for all SPCA activities. We do not have a shelter facility and depend on foster parents to care for domestic animals until adoption.

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Remembering the Animals this Holiday Season 2007 Annual Appeal



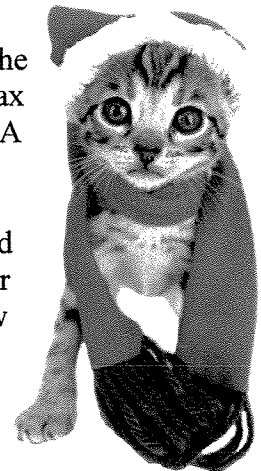
We are officially kicking off our **Annual Holiday Appeal**, inspired by our continuing desire to help many more animals in need during 2008.

Whenever we are asked for the secret to our ability to rescue, rehabilitate and successfully place so many cats and dogs in forever homes each year, we smile and respond, "**We did it with a lot of help.**" Help from people all over the Metropolitan area who support our cause and care enough to remember us each year during our annual appeal. Your checks and online donations are the security blanket for the most grateful among us—the innocent animals.

With your support, the SPCA of Northern Virginia will be able to continue its mission: To provide education and outreach in the community, medical services for rescued animals, humane investigations, safe shelter for homeless animals, and strong adoption programs to ensure that every companion animal lives in a safe, loving and secure home.

Please remember the animals this holiday season. At the end of the year, many of you are looking for a great tax deduction. As a 501(c)(3) organization, any gift to the SPCA of Northern Virginia is tax deductible.

To all the furry (and not so furry) members of your household the SPCA of Northern Virginia would like to extend our affection and best wishes to you and yours as "fellow friends" of animals this Holiday Season.



Donations to the SPCA 2007 Holiday Appeal can be made easily using the form on the back cover, or to make a donation by credit card please visit our website www.spcanova.org

Please be as generous as you can.



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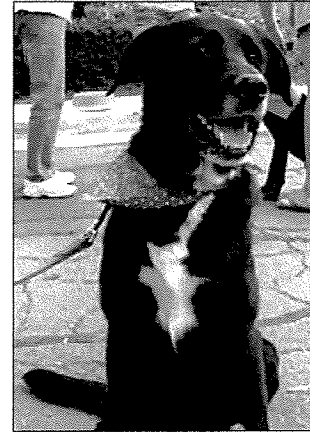


suggested that Jenni and Gary go with her to Lisa's so that they could observe Stryder just being himself without the human and canine distractions of an adoption day. Gary played ball with Stryder and they all enjoyed the big dog's antics in the wading pool. At home Jenni exercised her wifely wiles and reminded Gary that Sinbad would live in their hearts forever while Stryder was in the here and now.

So that did it. Of course Stryder could never replace Sinbad, nor should he. But he was another dog who deserved a good home and Jenni and Gary could provide it.

They adopted Stryder in September, 2007. He and Sophie have bonded and both dogs enjoy long walks

with their humans. Stryder still loves chasing balls that Gary throws, but he likes being a lap dog, too-- all 80 pounds of him. He's intelligent, affectionate and playful, according to Jenni. His coat is the glossy one he was meant to have, and his life is good. Now isn't that the happy ending all our dogs deserve?



One very happy dog!

Considering A Dog From Rescue? Note To Adopters

Lassie, Cleo, Rin Tin Tin and Toto don't show up in rescue. We don't get the elegantly coiffed, classically beautiful, completely trained, perfectly behaved dog. We get the leftovers. Dogs that other people have incompetently bred, inadequately socialized, ineffectively "trained," and badly treated. Most Rescue dogs have had it. They've been pushed from one lousy situation to another. They've never had proper veterinary care, kind and consistent training, or sufficient company. They've lived outside, in a crate, or in the basement. They're scared, depressed and anxious. Some are angry. Some are sick. Some have given up.

But we are Rescue and we don't give up. We never give up on a dog. We know that a dog is a living being, with a spirit and a heart and feelings. Our dogs are not commodities, things, or garbage. They are part of sacred creation and they deserve as much love and care and respect as the next Westminster champion. So please, please don't come to rescue in the hopes of getting a "bargain," or indeed of "getting" anything. Come to Rescue to give, to love, to save a life -- and to mend your own spirit. For Rescue will reward you in ways you never thought possible. I can promise you this -- a rescue dog will make you a better person.

~Author Unknown

JRT Medical Fund Update

Thank you, donors, for your generous support. Our Special Appeal to help finance the needed surgery for two kittens, Jo-Jo and Ruffles, suffering from a genetic birth defect called Upper Eyelid Agenesis generated an outpouring of monetary support. We are happy to report that both kittens have been placed in their adoptive homes and will be eligible for the surgical procedure at the early part of 2008. We couldn't have accomplished this without you. The response was nothing short of amazing! Below are updates on the kittens.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to all the donors who contributed toward this worthy cause:

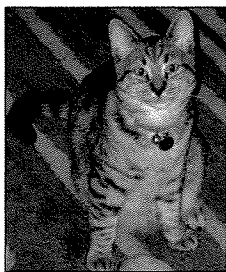
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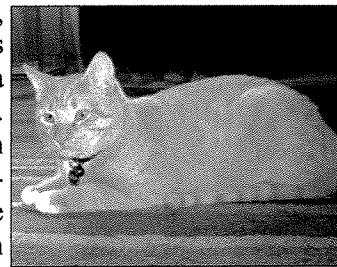
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Jo-Jo (Neko) - We've had Neko for approximately 4 months. It was a bit rocky at first because Jada (our other cat) was not amused by our new addition to the family. After spending lots of quality time with them, we have new appreciation for what people with children deal with on a daily basis, and Neko and Jada get along great. We regularly catch them bathing each other and cuddling together. Neko is very precocious and she doesn't seem to have any fear. Unlike Jada, she wants to be in the middle of everything all the time, and now she has Jada doing it too. Neko hasn't had any problems with her eyes and we remain diligent about lubricating them at least 4 times a day. We are starting to think that she is relieved when we come home from work and "do her eyes". It must be uncomfortable having eye lashes rub on your eyes all day. We went to the veterinary ophthalmologist in October and he said her eyes look great considering her condition. Our next appointment will be in January at which time he anticipates that we will schedule her surgery. The doctor makes it sound like we have nothing to worry about, but after reading about the procedure we are nervous but hopeful. For now, we are looking forward to the holidays. We are hoping Neko doesn't take to climbing the Christmas tree. We will keep a close eye on our wild child.



Ruffles (George) & Taffy (Fred) - Both boys are still sweeties, but they are definitely developing very different personalities. Fred is happy to plop down on any lap that is available anytime he can, with a purr so loud we have to turn up the TV when he is in the room. George is much more discerning--he wants love and affection, but on HIS terms and HIS schedule. Although when he sees that Fred is getting attention, he often runs over to demand his fair share. They are such good friends and sleep and play together all the time. Even though George is now quite a bit smaller than Fred, he still wins most



of their wrestling matches. Despite having a billion different cat toys, their current favorite things to play with are balled up post-it notes and an empty paper towel roll. George is still very good about getting his eye medicine, although Fred has now decided that he needs to "help" by stealing the cap to the medicine whenever he can.

