



The Peppertree POST

2013 Volume 3

What do we do? Rescue dogs of good temperament who need new homes • Cooperate with and assist other rescues, shelters, and animal control • Educate the public about how to obtain a companion animal.

Tango and Rocky, Brothers Reunited

By Michelle Bacares

When looking to adopt a dog, it is natural to have a vision of the ideal dog—perhaps friendly, lively, affectionate, etc.

But inexplicably, when looking for my second dog in 2006, I was immediately drawn to Tango who was fearful, withdrawn, not interested in people, treats, and other dogs. “Are you sure you want to adopt this dog?” asked my friend who accompanied me to the clinic, surprised that I’d be interested in a dog who didn’t seem to have much to offer. But the way I looked at it, Tango wouldn’t be too demanding. Plus, Peppertree convinced me that with some training and patience, he would come out of his shell and flourish. They were right.

Over the past seven years, Tango has transformed. Although he is, in general, a low-key dog, he is also funny, lively, fond of going for walks and jogs, digging for moles, playing chase and tug of war, and using his stealth techniques to steal other dogs’ toys when they least expect it.

So, imagine my surprise when, in March 2013, I saw what appeared to be Tango, up for adoption on the Peppertree website! I read the description and realized it was Tango’s brother Rocky. Tango and Rocky had come from South Carolina in 2006 after being found with their mother and another sibling in an abandoned building. Like Tango, Rocky had also been adopted out in 2006, but had recently come back to Peppertree. My heart broke at the thought of Tango’s brother being homeless, so I arranged to foster him.

In person, he didn’t look like the picture. The picture was from his arrival to New York in 2006. Rocky now appeared greyer, and he no longer had a rich, shiny, black coat. Much of the hair on his chest and legs was missing due to allergies. His skin was inflamed and pink. He was on a special diet and two antibiotics, and required frequent medicated baths.

I brought Tango with me when picking up Rocky. I envisioned a joyful reunion full of jumping and tail wagging. They met on leash outside my car—neither dog reacted. No tail wagging. No jumping. No sniffing. Nothing. They just stood there,



then jumped in the car and came home. I wondered, were they not brothers? Or was sniffing not necessary because they remembered each other from seven years ago?

Any question of whether they were brothers was put to rest once they got home. Their similarities were uncanny. On their first walk, their tails wagged in sync. They speak in the same manner—with vocalizations ranging from meow-like to howl-like. When going for walks, they stop in the same spots to scan for rabbits. They are both low-energy, but with occasional, sudden and brief spurts of frenetic running and playing.

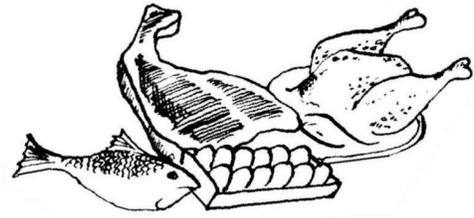
I took Rocky to his first adoption clinic in June. He was terrified. He tucked his tail, cringed, and did everything possible to avoid potential adopters. I was surprised. At home, he didn’t seem the slightest bit shy. I had perhaps underestimated how comforting it might have been for Rocky to come into a home where his brother was already residing. We decided to take a break from clinics for a while.

A month and a half later, it was time for us to go back. As I thought about bringing him to another clinic, my reaction was a mix of panic and indignation. “I’m not going to let someone adopt *my dog!*” I thought. Then I paused and realized what I had said. “My dog.” I knew there was no going back. On July 13th, I signed Rocky’s adoption papers.

There are a total of 4 dogs in our home. My first dog, Jackson, was adopted from Peppertree in 2006, after I painstakingly researched a number of rescues and shelters. I was drawn to Peppertree because they really seemed to care about doing

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“You Are What You Eat” Applies to Pets, Too



By Rick Hartt

You've heard that old expression, right? You are what you eat? Well, it is as true for animals as it is for people. Certain ingredients can cause some pets to feel ill and experience allergy symptoms just like they can for humans. Readers, please know that I am not a pet-food expert. I simply tried to educate myself by reading some non-commercial websites and seeking advice from veterinary staff and informed store staff as well as Peppertree's knowledgeable volunteers like Teresa Jurdy who has written articles on nutrition for previous newsletter issues.

I got involved looking at pet food ingredients when we adopted our Peppertree dog, Jack, and it soon became obvious that he had allergies. His ears were black and crusted, he scratched, and he chewed his paws, all classic signs of allergies. We had a blood test done called "Liquid Gold" by Veterinary Allergy Reference Laboratory that told us Jack had significant allergies to corn, fish, rice, lamb, potato and milk, and less severe reactions to oats, chicken and rabbit. Many dog foods today contain these ingredients. Not being a nutrition expert, I wasn't sure what to try for his food. I spoke with our vet tech and looked for some websites that would give good input about what types of food would work for our dog. We found a solution that is right for Jack – a food that contained none of those allergens. What was more important is that on these websites, we found information about what the list of ingredients on the package really means, and gives recommendations about what to avoid.

As I looked at solutions for Jack, there were some websites that really intrigued me and gave me information that I felt that I could trust. These sites operate without sponsorship dollars from pet food manufacturers. Two excellent sites are www.dogfoodadvisor.com and www.dogfoodproject.com. For those who are interested in activism related to pet food, I like Susan Thixton's site, www.truthaboutpetfood.com. This free site automatically sends out food recall notices to anyone who subscribes. More a little bit later about how much the commercial food industry fears the information on this website.

Some of the things that I look for now are based on what I read about certain ingredients and what works for our dog who is allergic to even some of the best ingredients. All of the websites talk about what the major ingredients are, usually the first five that are listed on the label. One of the things that I like about these websites is that they are analytical in their approach, giving good reason to look at each of the items. For an analysis of a specific food, www.dogfoodadvisor.com provides ratings of 1 to 5 stars as well as a full analysis of the ingredients in the specific brand.

If you are really interested in understanding what is in the food and why you may want to avoid certain foods, www.dogfoodproject.com lists over 50 items in detail, grouped into categories such as additives, binders, carbohydrates, coloring agents, fat sources, fiber sources, flavoring agents, fruits and vegetables, preservatives, protein, supplements, and vitamins.

Now, on to Susan Thixton's website, www.truthaboutpetfood.com (TAPF). In my opinion, the commercial pet food industry fears the information on this website. Last year they purchased the URLs for both "truth about pet food.net" and ".org". When you type in those websites they re-direct to the Pet Food Institute website, www.petfoodinstitute.org, which is funded by and is a public relations arm of the pet food industry. On July 31, the four articles published in TAPF focused on the illegal drug residue in Dogswell jerky treats, the bacterial issues for your pet with Goss's corn wilt, the use of flavorings to convince your dog to eat the food, and a discussion about what 7 major manufacturers mean when they use the term "real meat". In addition the individuals involved in TAPF go to federal and state meetings to lobby for good pet food practices, confront manufacturers and lax regulators, and bring food issues to the forefront before they would normally be acted on.

I hope that this information piques your curiosity and inspires you to investigate the food you feed your pet. Remember, if your dog eats it, the dog owns it, but you purchased it! It is a myth that good food is overly expensive. There are several local pet supply stores who offer a purchaser incentive program and pass on savings to pet owners. Inevitably, we are the ones who have to be responsible for what goes into the mouths of our furry family members.



Peppertree Rescue, Inc.

(A 501 (c) (3) Not-for-Profit Charity)

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When Owners Can No Longer Keep Their Dog

by Alissa Barnett

When I started as a volunteer for Peppertree, I had a simplistic view of things. Somehow we got dogs who needed homes, and we found them homes. For years I didn't question where the dogs came from or the process it took to get them to Peppertree. Then I accepted the job of Owner Surrender Intake Coordinator. I had no idea what I was in for.

It would be easier to write this article with just the facts of the owner surrender process. I would let you know that owners who can no longer keep their dogs submit applications, we meet and evaluate the dogs, and those who are of Peppertree temperament come into the program and we place them. And while that is the official process, it is far from being that simple.

It often starts with a call to the Peppertree hotline. A volunteer makes the original contact with the owners and asks them to fill out our online application, and gives them a brief rundown of the process. Sometimes this is accomplished with a quick message left on an answering machine, but sometimes it involves counseling the owner, listening to them cry, listening to them explain why they must surrender their dog, how wonderful their dog is, how things are just not working, and how they need help. This job requires you to be a good listener, and compassionate, but also to be tough, as it can be hard. Often the people who call are having a hard time with their financial situation or their health, but sometimes they are not such sympathetic characters. Sometimes these people view the dog as a problem and expect you to take that problem off their hands. Fortunately, this rarely happens, but still, dealing with owner surrenders often requires a degree in psychology, or at least the ability to bite your tongue.

About fifteen surrender applications are submitted to Peppertree each month. Sadly, we simply do not have the room to take in

this many dogs. Some of them are not able to pass Peppertree's temperament test, and do not qualify for our program. But what is a group of dog lovers to do when presented with a dog in need of help? We help. Every applicant receives a phone call, every owner is offered the chance to explain their situation, and every dog is offered an evaluation. The owners are asked to share in the responsibility and bring the dogs to us at clinics, where we meet and evaluate them. Meanwhile we find out as much as we can about the dog so that when we meet them, we already have an idea of the type of foster home, or adoptive home, they would need.

Peppertree usually has adoption clinics twice a month, and we often have two to five dogs scheduled for evaluations at each clinic. Many do not show up; sometimes the owners have changed their mind or have found someone to take the dog, sometimes we have been able to help the owner find a way to keep her, sometimes we (or they) have already found another group to help. But those dogs who do come are introduced to other dogs, we see how they do being handled by strangers, and we see how they behave in a new, stressful environment. It may seem unfair to the dog to be put through all this, but we want to see the dog at its worst, not its best. If a dog can wag his tail and lick your hand when he is stressed and scared, that is a good dog, a Peppertree dog.

Once the dog is evaluated, it is time to talk. We talk with the owner about whether the dog has passed our evaluation process, and if it has, we talk about how long the family can keep the dog while we publicize it on our website, our options for a foster home, the type of adoptive home the dog would do best in, whether it can be kenneled. If the dog does not pass our evaluation we talk about different kinds of options – other groups, maybe a breed specific rescue, help them figure out how things could be managed in the home while we post the dog's picture on our Neighbor's Corner page, and sometimes, we talk about euthanasia. Sometimes a dog is too sick, too anxious, too aggressive to help. Maybe they could not handle the transition, or be safely managed in another home. Or their health is deteriorating. Sometimes it is kinder to let a dog leave this world surrounded by the people who love it than to send him or her to another home. It is hard to write that, it is hard to think that, and it is hardest to say that -- to tell someone who loves their dog that maybe re-homing is not the kindest thing. But sometimes it has to be said.

Often owner surrenders are families losing their jobs, losing their homes, or moving to a place where their dog is not allowed. Sometimes an elderly owner is going to assisted living, or a relative has died and left a dog. Sometimes the dogs are victims of divorce, or allergies, or are simply the wrong fit for a good family. I am happy to say that more often than not, the people looking for help are good people, with good dogs, who simply cannot give the dogs the care they need. And that is why Peppertree is happy to help. Good people, and good dogs, are what Peppertree Rescue is all about.

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of articles about Peppertree Rescue's intake process. An article on our collaboration with shelters was printed in the 2012 v.2 issue of The Peppertree Post. It can be viewed at <http://peppertree.org/newsletters.php>.



Doris Day Dogs



With the continuing support of another annual grants from the Doris Day Animal Foundation (DDAF), we are able to help dogs like these, whose medical conditions require more veterinary care than we are able to recover through their adoption fees.

In addition to their monetary support, the DDAF website (DDAF.org) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/DDAF.org>) regularly feature the stories of the Peppertree dogs and the efforts of our volunteers to save them.

Many thanks to Ms. Doris Day and the entire staff at The DDAF!



Nemo



Van



Chipper



Storm



Dear Abby



Autumn



Marley



China



Di



Lulu
and
her
friends
had a
lemonade
stand
...



to raise money for dog rescue work. They did a great job of bringing in business....lots of cartwheels and screaming! It was a wonderful neighborhood event with some of the children even knocking on doors looking for thirsty patrons. Before the event they went online to look at each dog up for adoption to see exactly who they were helping. They were so excited to help the dogs.

Peppertree and all the dogs thank them for their efforts!



Peppertree Volunteer Spotlight

Meet -- Deborah Moon

Occupation – Registered Nurse, Prime Care Pediatrics

How long have you been volunteering with Peppertree, and what are your volunteering roles? About 13 years. I am on the Board of Directors and I handle dogs and help adopters at clinics. I help monitor our telephone hotline, I'm "Queen of the Course Marshals" at our Furry Fun Run, and I keep a file of health records. I also foster occasionally.

Name and breed of dogs in your family? Any other animals in the home? We are currently owned by "Wallace E Gromit" - St Bernard mix, Totaro- Alaskan Malamute and 5 felines: Molly, Mickie, Viirgo, Sabrina and Louise.

How or why did you come to be a Peppertree volunteer? After being adopted by "Miss Nellie" in 1999-2000, I started helping with clinics at Reigning Cats and Dogs. I was so impressed by the people and the organization, then one thing led to another. One dog led to another and another and...

Continued next page

Volunteer Spotlight continued

What surprised you most about rescue once you became more involved? The people of course, their commitment and the ideals of the group. What really impressed me though, was the resilience of the dogs. Some came from horrid circumstances but still found it in their hearts to forgive and move on. Their ability to live in the moment has been a valuable lesson for me.

Do you have a favorite breed? If so what is it? I would have to say I'm still a "Golden" person. I was brought up with a Siberian Husky, have had a Lab, 4 Golden retrievers and now my big boys, but I miss having a "Golden girl".

What is your favorite activity to do with your dogs? Our daily walks. It's a great way to start and end each day. I also love to canoe with the dogs. Wallace is pretty good at it, Totaro prefers dry land.

Does one Peppertree dog stick out in your mind? My first Peppertree dog, Miss Nellie. She was a Golden mix that had elbow and hip dysplasia but never let it get her down. She was a perfect canoe partner, nanny, dog mentor and friend.

What is your favorite thing about Peppertree Rescue? I can honestly say I am proud of the organization, the work we do and the way we conduct business. The dogs and people have been great "Life Coaches".

What was your first volunteer activity and why did you get involved? I did volunteer activities through Girl Scouts, became a "Candy Stripper" at the local hospital. I volunteered for Whiskers for about 10 years, then moved to PEPPERTREE! And when the kids were growing up, they almost put up a cot for me at the school. Parents as Reading Partners, Scouts, etc.

Pose a question for the next person in the volunteer spotlight. What was the most memorable catastrophe that your dog(s) caused?

Before you know it, it will be time for Peppertree's 7th annual Spaghetti Dinner!

Saturday, November 16th from 5pm to 8pm

Take-out beginning at 4pm

Cohoes Multi-Service Senior Citizen Center, Inc.
10 Cayuga Plaza, Cohoes, NY.

\$12 for adults, \$5 for children,
children 5 and under eat for free!

Meals include spaghetti with meat sauce,
meatballs and sausage, fresh Italian bread,
Caesar salad, beverage and homemade dessert.

Vegetarian marinara or pesto option also available.

Won't you join us?





SAVE THE DATE!

Peppertree Rescue's Alumni Picnic,
a celebration for people and dogs!
Bring your entire family to celebrate
Peppertree and our extended family.

Dogs are welcome at this picnic, and encouraged!

Sunday September 29th at Cook Park's Sharon Pavilion, Colonie, Noon to 3pm.

\$12 for adults, \$5 for children; Family Package: \$30 for two adults and two kids

The picnic will be an all you can eat buffet with hamburgers, hotdogs, veggie burgers and Joe G's Famous Grilled Chicken, along with side salads, chips, apple crisp and beverages.

We will also have a raffle and desserts available for purchase.

RSVPs are appreciated, but not required,
and drop-ins are welcome.

If you plan on coming please email us at
ptalumnipicnic@peppertree.org

This is a favorite event for many Peppertree
volunteers as it brings together so many
wonderful people and dogs! Please join us
this year – there will be a captive audience
to hear you brag about your dog!



Tango and Rocky, cont. from p. 1

the right thing. The descriptions on their website seemed honest, never sugar-coated. They seemed to value temperament over more superficial qualities. They worked hard to match the right dog with the right family. Over the past 7 years, I have been consistently impressed by the thought and care that Peppertree puts into their rescue work, and by their willingness to give the traditionally less-desirable dogs a fair chance. Perhaps some would not see the appeal of a shy, allergic, half-bald, senior dog such as Rocky, but Peppertree knows that goodness comes from within.

Rocky has come a long way. His hair has grown back. He no longer shows any signs of allergies. He has developed into a goofy, sweet dog, who loves his walks and belly rubs. He gets along spectacularly with the other 3 dogs in the household. And he has shown me what a pleasure it can be to give a home to a peaceful, gentle senior dog.

Editor's Note: Our adoption contract states that Peppertree promises to take back every dog we place at any time for any reason. Once a Peppertree dog, always a Peppertree dog!



Peppertree Rescue, Inc.
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Dear Jenny,

My mom just got a new rescue dog named Spike. He is a small dog and seems like a nice fellow. I'm not opposed to making friends with canines, but Spike barks and runs away when he sees me. I tried rubbing against him and he bolted under the bed. How can I become friends with Spike? We are the only animals in the home and I'm looking forward to some cuddle time this winter.



Sincerely, Thomas the Tom Cat

Dear Thomas,

I admire your bravery and goodwill with Spike. I would not be so charitable with my friendly charm. That being said, there are steps that can be taken to break the ice with Spike. Your mom should make all interactions between you and Spike positive experiences for the dog. You can help with this by not getting too close, and not touching him for now. When you are in the same room as the dog, Spike should be getting yummy treats for sitting quietly and focusing on your mom and not on you. You should try to get a bit closer to the dog each time you see him, and your mom can help with that. If Spike is rewarded for sitting calmly and not barking when you are strutting your stuff near him, he will eventually learn to accept you. Mom should also feed you and Spike near each other. I think in time you will become good friends.

Your feline friend,
 Jennyanydots

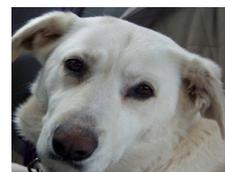
Jennyanydots is a 14 year old grey tabby who unfortunately has had to live with numerous large canines. She currently resides with Teddy the Lab, three male cats who she affectionately refers to as the Three Stooges, and Patrice and Marty O'Connor.



To subscribe to the Peppertree Post, visit <http://www.peppertree.org/newsletters>. To correct an address or unsubscribe, please email rescue@peppertree.org with "Peppertree Post correction" in the subject.

Foster Homes Needed

Please . . . consider opening up your heart and home to one of our dogs or puppies for a few days or weeks to give them a chance at a new life.



We have to turn away many animals in need because of a shortage of foster homes.

Most of our dogs are fostered before being placed, so if you own a Peppertree dog, your pet probably benefitted from the kindness of one or multiple foster home volunteers.

Won't you show another dog or pup the same kindness?