



The Peppertree POST

2009 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.

Her Own Guardian Angel *By Karen Harmon*

We consider all of our dogs to be special, but some of our rescues stand out as particularly wonderful saves, especially when the match between dog and human seems like it was meant to be. Such is the case for Peppertree volunteer Peg Buckley and her senior pit bull-mix Moses.

A compassionate State Police sergeant found Moses wandering on a busy road in the Town of Bethlehem on New Year's Day 2009 during a particularly bitter cold spell. A striking dog with a graying face, reddish coat and tiger markings, Moses was very underweight and the sergeant's first impression was that the dog had been hit by a car. The sergeant cradled him in his arms and carried him to a nearby house to try to find the owner. No one recognized the dog, but a resident offered to care for him until animal control officer Dick Watt could come to take him to Reigning Cats & Dogs, a local boarding kennel that holds all stray dogs for the Town of Bethlehem.

Dick determined that Moses was not injured and took him to the boarding kennel, but no one called to reclaim the dog and it was obvious to Dick that someone had dumped Moses in the bitter cold. The Town held Moses for two weeks, but could hold him no longer so Dick convinced Peppertree to assist him because he thought Moses would have a much better chance of getting adopted through our placement program. Estimated to be twelve years old, he originally was dubbed Tigger because of his markings, but our



volunteers renamed him Moses because of his quiet dignity and wise old eyes.

Peppertree Has A New President!

Betsy Sommers, President Emeritus

What's the saying? "Old rescue presidents don't die - they just go to the dogs?" it goes something like that. Since Peppertree was founded (January 1, 1999), I have been President of this organization and David Sawicki, the other co-founder, has been Treasurer. It's very typical in rescue that a program is formed by and continues to be run by its original founder(s), sometimes slowly dissolving or changing radically when they are no longer able or willing to provide that leadership.

From Peppertree's inception, David and I have always felt and hoped, that this organization is a lot bigger than any individuals. From the beginning, we and those who have joined us on the Board of Directors, have wanted it to become a "machine that would go of itself" – a phrase stolen from the 19th century editor and diplomat James Russell Lowell, referring to the

There is a saying that there are "no coincidences in rescue." Just before Moses entered our program, a new volunteer named Peg Buckley started fostering dogs for Peppertree. Peg likes to foster older dogs, especially those with special needs. A retired elementary school teacher who lives in Latham, she has volunteered at the Mohawk and Hudson River Humane Society in Menands since 2000, including more than three years as a Board member, and has also fostered dogs for Project Drumm, another local rescue group. She learned about Peppertree through another shelter volunteer, Mary Ellen Grimaldi, who is also a Peppertree volunteer and Board member. Peg fostered her first Peppertree dog, Belinda, in December 2008. In January, she began fostering an eleven-year-old black lab named Chrissy on behalf of both Project Drumm and Peppertree. Chrissy was adopted during an adoption clinic held at the Latham PetsMart at the end of January. Peg was about to leave the clinic that day without a foster dog when someone asked her if she would consider fostering Moses. Peg agreed after Eileen Rogers, another

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Peppertree volunteer, offered to accompany her home to help introduce Moses to Peg's own pack of animals (Louie, a nine year old beagle mix, Cutie Pie, a fifteen year old female lhasa apso and Tina Baby, a 13-year-old cat). Mary Ellen also helped out by bringing medicine for Moses to Peg's home.

It did not take long for Moses to settle into Peg's home and daily routine. He was very laid back and got along fine with all of her animals. In addition to his obvious lameness in his back area, Peg began noticing that he was leaking urine so Peppertree obtained medicine to address that and she began fitting him with doggie diapers. Peppertree advertised Moses and Peg faithfully

Peppertree Has A New President! Betsy Sommers, President Emeritus article continued..

American Constitution. We feel we have a good model for a rescue organization and one that can continue to function even after the founders are spending more time playing with pups than we do organizing the business of their rescue.

To achieve this, we must at some point transition from "original leadership" to "new leadership," and that process has begun. At our Board's annual meeting in March (which, by the way, is one of the more irreverent and informal events ever to earn that fancy title!), we added a new person to our five-person Board of Directors, created the off-Board but still central position of President Emeritus, and elected a new President. Mary Ellen Grimaldi is the new Director; Donna Burdick,

David, and Peg Boughton retain their positions as Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, respectively; and Kevin Wilcox, who has been a Director for several years, has become Peppertrees 2nd President.

Congratulations and commiserations are both extremely appropriate, and equal in measure. Because Peppertree is still a rather complex and active organization – and because Kevin has an incredibly high-level job at SUNY Albany, this transition is going to be quite gradual. At least for the first year, Kevin and I will be working very closely together, almost in the manner of co-presidents. Since we've always had the same philosophy and instincts about how things should be done, and since the rest of the Board and most of the other volunteers are quite adept at speaking their minds and taking the lead if they feel strongly about something, there probably won't be many noticeable changes in our day to day operations.

Eventually, however, we hope that both David and I can become more senior advisors, formalizing some of the lessons we've learned, taking on special projects, and serving as more institutional memory rather than hands on management. Whatever changes do - and don't - come about, however, our central goal, and philosophy, remains unchanged: "We do it for the dogs." As long as Peppertree's leaders and volunteers hold to that mindset, we'll be fine.

It's been a great ride so far. I look forward to the new role I'll be shaping, and I know that we are extremely fortunate to have someone of Kevin's skills, outlook and commitment willing to step up at this time.



Peppertree Rescue, Inc.

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

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Old Dogs, New Kids

Part 2

by Jason Denham

The first part of this article appeared in Volume 4 of the 2008 Peppertree Post, see the website for details. At the time, my wife Melinda and I were expecting twins, and I was seeking and compiling tips on how to ease the transition for ourselves, our existing pack of three Peppertree dogs, and of course the new babies.

I promised at the time to pen a second installment, after the birth, to review what advice helped, what didn't, and what I've learned along the way. I'm not going to cover everything from part one, just the points that were most interesting or relevant to us- your mileage may vary.

To Make the Gods Laugh, Make Plans

Most of the advice I found about pre-birth preparation was right on point: have your dogs fully vetted, including spayed or neutered, and work on any training or behavioral problems while you still have time. Thank goodness we were in pretty good shape even before the pregnancy, because we didn't have as much prep time as we thought. James and Sophie were born very unexpectedly in late December, a full two months early. We didn't even have a hospital bag packed yet, much less finalized plans to have the dogs taken care of in our absence. I have to thank my parents here, as they got up in the middle of the night and drove three hours, only to feed the dogs and take



them to our boarding kennel before rushing to the hospital to see their first grandchildren.

The early arrival changed many other things as well. It would be another six weeks before the babies came home from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Needless to say we spent many evenings at the hospital while Boogaloo, Lady and Tramp had only a hastily left dinner and each other for company back at the house. In hindsight, there were silver linings as well. We had many opportunities to bring home the babies' scents before the real things arrived, and the pack certainly got used to odd hours and new routines. Still it was hard on everyone.

We're Home, Now What?

After all that came before, bringing the babies home and introducing them to the pack was fairly anticlimactic. There was no drama whatsoever, even when we first came in the

door. At first, bassinets moved into our room while dog beds moved into the hallway, and nobody seemed to mind. Ultimately though, one piece of advice we were unable to follow was to keep dogs out of the nursery. Baby gates were more of an obstacle for us than they were for dogs, and Lady, who had shadowed Melinda throughout the pregnancy, had transitioned readily to shadowing the twins wherever they happened to be.

With a parent (and often a grandparent) home at all times, we've probably spent just as much time with the dogs as we did before, and we make an effort to exercise them just as regularly, though the hours may sometimes be odd. All in all, the adjustment process for the dogs has gone pretty smoothly, thanks in part to that Peppertree temperament, of course.

Good to Know...

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Our First Year as Foster Parents

By Lynn Landschoot

Did you ever sit in your living room reading an article, and think; “I can do that.”

Well that’s what happened to me, however, unlike business as usual I decided to act on that passing thought.

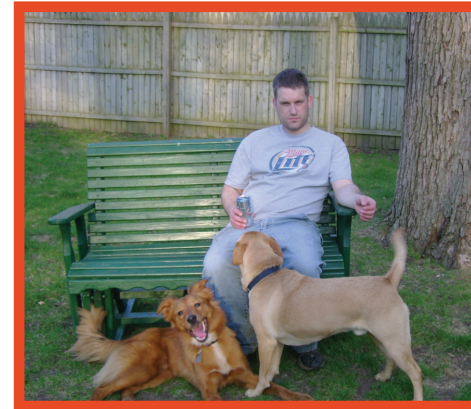
“Foster Homes Needed” is an ad that regularly appears in the Peppertree Post. My fiancé Bob was hesitant about the idea to say the least, and I wasn’t overly sure. Then the Keatman (Keaton’s soon to be nickname) showed up at my work, a little smelly and definitely scared. I lifted the lug into my car, and drove home thinking “what have I gotten myself into?” Keat had a bath, met Yankee and then slept, slept, and slept. This fostering stuff seemed easy. Eventually he woke up, he had his quirks, like hatred for small dogs, but all and all it was going great. About six days into the fostering adventure we learned our first lesson. Foster dogs need to be crated, at least in the beginning. It only cost us one pillow so we should consider ourselves lucky. When Keat and I walked into my first adoption clinic I felt like a rock star. Everyone knew him and loved him. At first I thought the adoption clinic was a little weird, all these volunteers are spending there Saturdays holding dogs in a PetSmart! By the end of the three hours, I decided I could do this again. Keat stayed with us for two months before he moved on to his next foster home. Yankee was depressed for days, he layed where Keats crate had been and whined for hours. The house was so quiet. Not only did I miss having another dog in the house I also missed the volunteers.

Once again I convinced Bob to let us get another foster dog. To be honest not so much convinced as just brought another dog home. Harley stayed for three days then bam he was adopted. This time I didn’t

wait to get another foster dog. Baxter stayed for two days. Two dogs adopted in one week, I thought we must be good at this or just really lucky. Abbey came to us next. We weren’t going to take another dog right then, and I promised Bob I wouldn’t come home with one. Those pesky volunteers twisted my arm and I couldn’t say no. Luckily Bob fell in love with Abbey and she with him. She followed him everywhere, and would only eat when he fed her. It was amazing and suddenly “Mr. I don’t want a dog” wanted to adopt her, but I had to put my foot down for a change and say no.

All dogs don’t just come into a house and get along. Yankee is pretty easy going and accept-

ing but Tanya only stayed for two days. They just couldn’t co-exist. The best part about fostering for Peppertree is they didn’t have to, as soon as we realized it wasn’t going to work Tanya was relocated. Tanya went out and Fawn came in. Fawn was great, she loved all of us. Yank and Fawn even cuddled together on the couch. That’s a bigger deal then it seems, as Yank likes his space when he sleeps. After a month Bob and I were contemplating keeping her. Then a wonderful man put in an application to adopt her. He could give her more attention than we could but it was still hard to see her leave.



Next was Megan who came for three days then got adopted. Then we were asked to take a super-shy foster dog for two weeks to see if he was ready for his forever home. We felt honored to be trusted with Seamus. Seamus was an interesting character and we weren’t sure how to handle a dog who wouldn’t let us touch him. Three days into the experience I was at work and Bob was home with the dogs. We were talking on the phone when Bob realized Seamus was nowhere to be found. I came home from work and Chris (his most recent foster dad) came and helped us search for him. We found him three hours later. I was mortified that we lost a dog, but the Peppertree folks quickly assured me it happens to everyone. Still I hope it doesn’t happen to us ever again.

Crazy hyper Willie came next. He was young and full of energy. The first time he laid down we cheered, and then he got right back up again. He would sit down and we (including Yankee) would look at each other like don’t anyone move. Yankee lost ten pounds from the constant playing. Our two months with Willie were exciting, aggravating, and for the first time I cried when a dog left.

Bandit is our most recent foster dog. He’s a great older dog, who follows me everywhere. Once again I’m thinking about adopting another dog. His forever home is coming soon and I will probably cry again.



My family and Co-workers enjoy my “crazy” foster dog stories. The question I have been asked the most is how can you “give” the dogs up when they get adopted. The answer is that it is hard and some are harder than others. If you know in the beginning that they are leaving it is easier to say goodbye. At first I told myself I wasn’t going to love them, that didn’t work. Now I try to remember, that they are going to have a wonderful life, and if we adopt them then we no longer have room to foster. Fostering has become very important to me and something I don’t want to give up. “Foster Homes Needed” (wink!)



Meet: Shelagh Dorn

Occupation? Sr. Intelligence Analyst, New York State Police-New York State Intelligence Center

Volunteer Location? West Sand Lake, NY

How long have you been volunteering with Peppertree, and what are your Volunteer Roles?

We're mainly a foster family. Dogs accepted into the Peppertree program are placed in homes, where we evaluate them and provide the attention and training they need. We've had a dozen dogs or more as fosters during our 1.5 years as volunteers. I also do occasional home visits for out-of-state rescue groups, and design forms and fliers when needed.

Name and Breed of dogs in your family? Any other animals in the home?

Boden, aka Bobo, is our chow/pit mix adopted from a Florida shelter; he's seven. Flint is my husband's six-year old German Shepherd police K-9. Tully is our two-year old red bone coonhound, adopted from Peppertree last year. One of our recent fosters, Rocky, was adopted last weekend after several months; we are still fostering Maya, a special needs St. Bernard. A brother & sister cat combination, Daisy Lulu and Simon, round out our menagerie. With a 3-year old, however, I never know what else has moved into the house – so far I've resisted turtles, grasshoppers, ladybugs, butterflies, and other animals she has claimed were her special "pets."

How or why did you come to be a Peppertree volunteer?

My husband adopted a Peppertree dog before we married. A few years ago, I learned a little more about the group; and it seemed like Boden needed a pal. Peppertree is very flexible – you can be as involved and committed as you'd like. We've fostered some dogs for the weekend; others have been in our home for seven months. If you need time off in between foster dogs, or have a vacation coming up, other homes step in and take the fosters. It's a really easygoing rescue group.



What surprised you the most about rescue once you became more involved?

I knew that there would be unwanted animals – unexpected litters, strays. I really have been shocked, however, to realize how "disposable" our society is, and how that translates into the way we perceive and treat our pets. Sadly, we seem to be a society that largely looks the other way and ignores the neglect, starvation, and physical abuse of animals. I've been amazed by the emotional abuse, too; so many people trade in their dogs without a second thought because the dog no longer "fits" their lifestyle or because they're tired of owning a pet, ignoring the emotional impact of such upheaval on their dogs.

Do you have a favorite breed? If so, what is it?

I've always loved Labs, because they tend to be such easygoing, family-friendly goofs that really enjoy people. But I've really grown to adore mixes and "mutts," each with a distinctive personalit.

What is your favorite activity to do with your dog(s)?

My dogs love it when I cook. I'm always accidentally dropping food that they're eager to "taste test." Plus they think I'm a fabulous chef.

What is your favorite thing about Peppertree Rescue?

Three aspects appeal to me. Economically, Peppertree is an effective solution to homeless and unwanted dogs. 100% of contributions and funds raised go directly to

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the dogs' care: spaying/ neutering, medical expenses, and food. Peppertree is a grassroots organization, so there are no overhead costs for salaries, buildings, heat and electricity. We take dogs in because each volunteer is committed to the Peppertree cause. The second: Peppertree people. Volunteers, adopters, former volunteers, Fun Walk and Spaghetti Dinner participants, all brought together because they love dogs. It's an organization that attracts professionals from all walks of life; a great network of people who share the triumphs and challenges of dog rescue in a nonjudgmental, supportive, and fun community. Finally, working with each foster is a symbiotic relationship. Nurturing, training, grooming, and rehabilitating builds each foster dog's confidence. Every positive experience makes them stronger. Their ultimate success – adoption – results from intensive hard work. Each save is tangible, hands-on, and immensely rewarding.



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I've picked up a few things myself in the past seven months. Offered without (much) further comment, they may or may not apply to other families:

- The difference between dog toys and baby toys is indistinguishable to both dogs and babies. If left close together, mistakes will be made. The same goes for dog beds/boppy pillows/play mats.
- Babies may sleep through a little barking (really!), but if a dog gets up and shakes, the jingling of dog tags is sure to wake them.
- If babies are in licking range, their faces will be clean.
- You can photograph babies, or dogs, but if you try to do both one will be out of focus.
- When seeing two parents walking down the street with a double stroller and three dogs, the human brain is pre-programmed with one and only one phrase: "Looks like you've got your hands full". We hear this verbatim at least 3-4 times a week.
- Also, if your neighbors didn't already think you are slightly crazy, they will now, and you may begin to think they are correct!



PEPPERTREE'S 3RD ANNUAL

Spaghetti Dinner

Saturday, October 3rd

The Cohoes Multi-Service Senior Citizen Center, Inc.

10 Cayuga Plaza, Cohoes, NY

5:00 pm until 8:00 pm

Adult Meals \$10.00, Kids Meals \$5.00, Kids Under 5 eat for free.

Tickets will be available for purchase before the event or at the door.

Special Request to Former Adopters

The Peppertree fundraising committee would like to feature pictures of our loveable Peppertree adopted dogs and their stories on the tables as centerpieces at our spaghetti dinner. If you could be so kind to send a picture of your Peppertree canine family member as a separate JPG file attachment and a write up to catherinekuz@hotmail.com it would be greatly appreciated. Please be sure to have your pictures and write-ups in by Friday, September 25th.

As you may know, this is not your average spaghetti dinner. This is a spaghetti dinner for real Italians -- sausage, meatballs, and sauce, whether with meat or vegetarian -- all dinners are freshly made with the finest ingredients, and all our volunteers are willing to work day and night to give you a good meal.



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A Rescue For Dogs Of Good Temperament

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?*