



# The Peppertree POST

2010 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.

## Pilots to the Rescue, for a Rescue

Peppertree Rescue got a little help from the sky in June when “Pilots N Paws,” a group of volunteer pilots, jumped in to help rescue a German Shorthaired Pointer (GSP) from a small Michigan shelter by transporting her to the Capital District.

Hershey, a nine-year-old female GSP, was turned into the shelter after her family felt that she was “no longer useful because her hunting days were over,” according to longtime Peppertree volunteer Katie Muller who also works closely with GSP Rescue. The Michigan shelter had been hit hard by the economy, was full of dogs and was going to have to euthanize Hershey because of space constraints. Fortunately for Hershey, the shelter staff really liked her and reached out to GSP Rescue in Michigan. The GSP rescue was inundated with dogs and had no room so a volunteer posted Hershey online to spread the word about her plight. Our volunteer Katie read about Hershey and asked Peppertree to get involved, but knew that out-of-state transports can be difficult to arrange. The shelter agreed to give Hershey a couple of extra days until arrangements could be made to get her out of the shelter and transport her to New York State.

Never one to give up easily, Katie got in touch with a GSP volunteer who also helps coordinate flights for Pilots N Paws. The GSP volunteer offered to post a request for assistance to the online forum to see if any pilots might be willing to help Hershey. Once two

Karen Harmon



pilots offered assistance, she coordinated the flights needed to get Hershey to the Fulton County Airport in upstate New York. Katie said, “I have to say that was the easiest transport ever! Hershey flew to the little airport five minutes from my house. I brought the pilot’s wife over to Wendy’s to grab a hamburger and then we both headed home. I wasn’t even gone an hour!” It was Peppertree’s first experience with the Pilots N Paws program and coincidentally, it was also the pilots’ first experience with the program. It was a successful, rewarding venture for everyone involved in Hershey’s rescue.

Pilots N Paws, which was established in February 2008, recruits volunteer pilots to fly shelter animals to new homes to save them from euthanasia. The group estimates that it has rescued more than 2,000 animals since it began operations. Air transport can be much less stressful than ground transport on animals that are traveling a long distance. For more information about Pilots N Paws, visit [www.pilotsnpaws.org](http://www.pilotsnpaws.org)

# Marti DeFronzo: A True “Peppertree Person”

Elizabeth Sommers, - Peppertree Founder

Martie DeFronzo, who passed away in June, was one of Peppertree’s founders. In fact, this organization was officially “born” at a table in her lovely Hillsdale home on an incredibly snowy morning in December 1998. She was one of the five original members of the Board of Directors and even after she retired from the Board (we actually let her stay retired the second time), she was designated our “Board Member Emeritus” and she was always brought in on our most important, and most difficult, decisions. Although we’d seen too little of her in recent years when she became less active because of health problems, Martie was always at our heart and always there to reach out to for a bit

of sanity and humor. She will be tremendously, and deeply missed.

I met Martie in the fall of 1996 when I was with another Golden Retriever rescue organization and was sent to her house to do a home visit. I’ve rarely had so much fun and, quite frankly, I didn’t want to leave! Nor did Pepper, my dog who had accompanied me and decided – as many other four-footed creatures had before her and after that day – that she’d found Dog Heaven, one complete with a special, fun-loving and always warm and welcoming angel. I convinced Martie (sort of) that fostering was more fun than adopting and so she became a key volunteer, in that organization and later in Pep-



pertree Rescue. She and Roc provided a welcoming – and healing – foster home for so many dogs and, well, some of the very lucky dogs just didn’t leave. I never convinced her that fostering was always better

than adopting. In fact, I believe the term “foster failure” was first invented to apply to the DeFronzo household. It should be noted Roc, her husband, was not an entirely innocent bystander in all this foster-failing. However, none of the dogs who arrived at their home as a frightened foster and went on to become full-fledged DeFronzos ever thought the word “failure” applied to anything about their particular situation.

Martie adopted dogs of all types, usually some relation to a Golden, but she was responsible for even more intakes of what came to be known as a “DeFronzo special.” These were the “black Goldens” that reminded her of her beloved Panda, a Newfie mix who had passed on shortly before we met. We used to start our stopwatches to measure the very short time between posting a picture of a Golden Retriever who just happened to be the wrong color and Martie’s inevitable response of “Yes, we should take him/her,” often followed by “and I’ll foster!” Ironically, the dog who most represented this type of dog, except for size, was the petite but powerful Cricket, a dog Martie actually adopted from another rescue group. Little Cricket earned a special place in Peppertree, however, as she helped Martie civilize and rehabilitate a great many foster dogs over the years. One of Martie’s daughters told us that Cricket was right by her side until the end.

The one thing we could never figure out about Martie’s dogs was that she typically had a large, happy, and congenial group of female dogs, while the rest of us were struggling with the conflicting personalities of two or more bitches, each of

whom wanted to be the boss and to send her sister(s) into the corner for misbehavior. Males are usually so much more easy-going and Martie did concede this eventually, but at Martie’s house, the girls always got along just fine. But, then, Martie had that same effect on people, too. Somehow – and I never fully understood – she always managed to give us perspective, to help us remember to keep the focus on the dogs, and to inject a little warmth and wisdom – and tolerance – into any situation. She wasn’t a “goody two-shoes” by any means – FAR more interesting than that and sometimes the humor had a delightfully wry and ribald edge to it! But to sit beside Martie at a clinic and talk a bit, or to get her on the phone about one thing but wander over into other topics, or to lean on her shoulder in order to vent and fuss and have her accept and understand but never to make a situation worse – these were pretty amazing experiences. I imagine over the many years there must have been times when she became irritated, or said something that was a bit harsh or cutting, but try as I might, I can’t recall any. What I, and others, remember are her sparkling eyes, the always-present and genuine half grin, and the warmth and acceptance with which she dealt with both the people and the dogs of Peppertree Rescue.

We will miss her very much – always. There is a tremendous emptiness knowing that she isn’t there to turn to. In fact, the only thought that offsets this sense of loss is imagining the fireworks and festivities that there must have been when she arrived on the other side, at the Rainbow Bridge.

## The Little Ship

*I stood watching as the little ship sailed out to sea. The setting sun tinted her white sails with a golden light, and as she disappeared from sight a voice at my side whispered, “She is gone.”*

*But the sea was a narrow one. On the farther shore a little band of friends had gathered to watch and wait in happy expectation. Suddenly they caught sight of the tiny sail and, at the very moment when my companion had whispered, “She is gone” a glad shout went up in joyous welcome, “Here she comes!”*

\*poem sent to Maria Shriver at the time of JFK Jr.’s death, paraphrased from Henry

Van Dyke



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

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## 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?*



Thanks to the over 40 people who braved the rainiest day of summer to come out and support Peppertree Rescue. The picnic made over \$600.00! It was so great to see so many Peppertree Alumni strutting their new owners around. See you next summer!



## Peppertree Volunteer Spotlight

**Meet:** Phyllis Cunningham

**Occupation?** Research Scientist

**Volunteer Location?** Albany, NY

**How long have you been volunteering with Peppertree?** About 5 yrs.

**What are your volunteer roles?**

Fund-raising Committee member and foster home for one Peppertree dog.

**How or Why did you get involved with volunteering for Peppertree?**

We first adopted a Peppertree dog who, through no fault of her own, could not stay with us. I felt very guilty that we had jeopardized this dog's chances for a good home, and began to volunteer with Peppertree to make amends. All turned out well, the dog in question has the forever home she was meant to have and we became involved as volunteers!

**Name and Breed of dogs in your family.**

Felix - a Golden Doodle  
A spot for one Peppertree foster dog

**Any other animals in the home?** Just Jack - my husband!

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

I think it depends on what dog I currently have in front of me. I love many breeds and can even



appreciate the characteristics of the breeds I would NEVER own.

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

Riding my bike with Felix on his WalkyDog® lead beside me is fun and exercise for both of us.

**What is your favorite thing about Peppertree?**

The people of Peppertree are the best thing about the organization. The variety of personalities, abilities and interests is vast, yet the group functions as a family, complete with all the "fun" of a standard dysfunctional group. Each of us brings our talents for use to better the lives of 'our' dogs, and each of us is respected for what we bring. I treasure all the friends I have found with Peppertree, and hope to continue to find more as I carry on as a volunteer.

## Toppermobile;

**A Dream Come True-**

Mary Ellen Grimald

Peppertree is fortunate to have volunteers with varied talents and work experience. Not to mention volunteers with great generosity of spirit. A few months ago, Lynn Holcomb, who works for a GM dealer, was able to locate a beautiful white 2008 Chevrolet Express Van 1500 that was available for purchase. Peppertree Rescue was able to purchase it through the GMAC Smart auction, an online auction where GM dealers can purchase vehicles from other dealers, directly from GMAC, or from rental car companies without ever leaving the office. Drivers went to Pennsylvania to pick it up and brought it back to Randall Buick GMC in Canandaigua NY where Lynn works. Lynn assisted Peppertree with the insurance and paperwork and then personally delivered the van to Albany.

Peppertree has been dreaming of its own van for a very long time, instead of using volunteers' personal vehicles some of which had over 200,000 miles, many of those miles accumulated during dog transport. The car manners of Peppertree dogs can be quite varied, and volunteers have been known to lose things like seatbelts, and sometimes whole seats to un-kenneled car riders. Additionally, for the money Peppertree could afford, finding a van in good enough condition was difficult until an anonymous donor, a long-time and steadfast friend of Peppertree, stepped forward.



The van is used to transport dogs to and from clinics at least twice a month and to schlep



*"A big Peppertree Rescue thanks to E.C. and his crew at Infamous Graphics in Albany for making the van legit with graphics."*

around the various supplies needed for these clinics. The van is still being outfitted, inside and out, which is also due to generous donations. Inside the van will be equipped with a Havaheart trap in the event that dogs get loose during a transport, and the outside is being decaled with a donated graphic so the van and the organization are easily identified and recognized.

The van has been christened the "Toppermobile" in memory of the son of Peppertree Rescue's namesake Pepper, a Golden Retriever named Topper.

In addition to the anonymous donor, thank you to all who donate to Peppertree Rescue, as the general financial health of the organization also made this purchase possible without sacrificing the number of dogs Peppertree can assist, or the care they receive.





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*A Rescue For Dogs Of Good Temperament*

**🐾 4th Annual Spaghetti Dinner 🐾**



That's right folks, it's time for Peppertree Rescue's Forth Annual Spaghetti Dinner. If you came out for it last year then you know what a deal this is, and if you missed it chances are you heard how good the food was. This is not your average spaghetti dinner, this is a spaghetti dinner for real paesans. Our resident paesan and volunteer extraordinaire Joe Grimaldi is running the show in the kitchen, he insists on the finest ingredients and is willing to work day and night to give you a good meal.

**When:**

**Saturday October 16th 2010, 5:00pm until 8:00pm**

**Where:**

**The Cohoes Multi-Service Senior Citizen Center, Inc.**

**How Much:**

**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.

Take out is also available (4:00pm to 8:00pm).

Menu: Spaghetti with Meat Sauce, Vegetarian Sauce, or Pesto;  
Meatballs, Sausage, Bread, Caesar Salad, Dessert Table, and Drinks.

**Lots of Great Raffle Packages!**

Come join us for delicious food and loads of fun!  
Thank you to the following donors who make this event possible:

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Hannaford

Mexican Radio Restaurant

Price Chopper

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Wal-Mart

**Hope to See You There!**