



The Peppertree POST

Holiday Newsletter 2007

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.

Peppertree featured on WMHT-TV

KAREN HARMON



(left to right) Peppertree Board Members Kevin Wilcox and Margaret Boughton in a segment being filmed by WMHT-TV at the home of Jean and John Balint

WMHT-TV aired a special segment on Peppertree Rescue in early September to highlight our efforts to find homes for senior dogs and help senior citizens either adopt loving companions or rehome their dogs when they can no longer keep them. The four-minute segment (show #12) featured a few of our volunteers and senior adopters and was part of the series "It's An Age Thing," which was co-produced by WMHT-TV and the Albany Guardian Society. The series highlights the creative and caring ways Capital Region residents are making a difference in their communities.

The WMHT crew spent time at the Delmar home of Jean and John Balint, filming them, their friend Edith McHugh and their dogs. Longtime foster volunteers, Jean and John have generously opened their home to countless senior dogs, including a special golden retriever named Daisy that they ultimately adopted. Thirteen-year-old Daisy romped in the backyard with Naya, Edith's black terrier mix, and foster dog Guinness, a twelve-year-old golden retriever. Jean recalled, "I was told that some organizations would not leave a dog with us because we were

far too old. Well, that seems foolish because dogs are good for old people; they get us walking every day." John pointed out that "Fostering dogs is a very rewarding experience. You get to know them and participate in the process of finding them a new family. I think that it is a win-win situation."

Four years ago, Jean called Edith and suggested that she stop over to see their latest Peppertree foster dog. Edith smiled as she recalled that day, "Naya came over to me and put her chin on my knee and, of course, has been with me ever since. She was 11 years old then and she is 15 1/2 now."

WMHT visited the home of foster volunteer Sam Stelmaszyk who has provided temporary refuge for at least fifteen senior dogs since joining Peppertree, including a couple of blind senior labs and a younger deaf Bloodhound named Nell that she and her husband Paul later adopted. "We like to foster senior dogs because we believe that they deserve a second chance, that there is a reason that they are with us and that they deserve the opportunity to be able to live the remainder of their years in a happy, loving environment," she explained. Sam proudly showed off eleven-year-old Baby, a happy-go-lucky corgi/lab mix

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who is waiting for her forever home.

WMHT also stopped by the Rotterdam home of Ron and Jo Przybylowski's home to visit with them and their two Peppertree golden retrievers, 15-year-old Keenah (adopted eight years ago) and 11-year-old Baron (adopted six years ago). To date, they have adopted four Peppertree dogs. Jo admitted to preferring senior dogs. "We like to adopt older dogs because they need to have a sense of finally being home with someone," she said. Despite their advanced age, the two dogs frolicked like puppies in the backyard for the camera crew.

Kevin Wilcox and Margaret Boughton (Peg), Peppertree Board members, added their thoughts about senior dogs and senior citizens. According to Kevin, "One of the most difficult situations we run into

is when a senior person has a dog and is facing a life change where they have to surrender a dog. One of the most satisfying things we can do is step in and reassure the senior that their friend will be taken care of." He added, "We never discriminate regarding the age of a dog and this turns into a win-win situation because 99 percent of the time a senior citizen coming to adopt a dog is looking for an older one. We hear many stories from seniors about how their dog invigorates them and gives them a reason to get up in the morning.

We require that if a dog needs to be rehomed for whatever reason, it must come back to Peppertree. As a result, it gives senior citizens some comfort that if they adopt and something happens in their life that they cannot keep the dog, it has a place to come back to." Peg summarized by saying, "Once it is a Peppertree dog, it is always a Peppertree dog."

Too often we find that potential adopters bypass senior dogs for pups and young dogs. We at Peppertree know that a senior dog is more settled than a younger dog and has so much life left to live and unconditional love to give back. We are grateful to WMHT-TV and the Albany Guardian Society for helping us raise awareness about the merits of adopting a senior dog and our efforts to help senior citizens, whether they are looking for a loving companion or need help finding a new home for their pet. 🐾

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

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Sharon Wolin and *Baby*



A New Beginning: Django Wilson

JEFFREY WILSON

When we first met Django his name was Bonkers, Peppertree tag #1991. The name fit. He was, and still can be at times, an excitable boy. We met him at a Peppertree adoption clinic at PetSmart in the Latham Farms shopping plaza. It was Saturday July 22, 2006 and it was Django's first foray into the outside world since arriving from Georgia three months prior. In fact, Django had only arrived at the adoption clinic about five minutes before we did. Although he was not much to look at, his exuberance and sweet personality won us over and we agreed to foster him with the intention of adopting him.

He was not much to look at that day because he was missing much of his coat, but patches of it seemed to be starting to grow. It was obvious that he had some German Shepherd in him but other than that it was hard to identify his breed. You see Django had been an inpatient at the Shaker Veterinary Clinic since his arrival in Albany because of a nasty case of Demodectic mange.

Demodectic mange is caused by the Demodex mite which attacks the hair follicle of an infected animal and can be a very difficult condition to cure. This is especially true in younger animals because their immune system is not fully developed until they near adulthood. Django was about four and a half months old when we met him, and he appeared to be completely cured. Unfortunately, this later proved not to be the case.

Within a few months, we started to see some indications that all was not well with Django. Inflammations of the skin started to appear, small bumps that we later learned were indicative of mite activity. By mid-October he started to lose sections of his coat and by Halloween he was a disastrous mess. Open sores around his face with dried, semi-healed hair and skin made him look like the poster boy for Demodectic Mange.

We patched him up through one of the standard Demodex treatments, and Mitaban dips, a strong chemical bath treatment. After many treatments he again returned

to health and regained his coat. But come January his condition recurred, worse than ever. Fortunately for Django, Peppertree agreed to step in and pick up his Vet bills while the good folks at Shaker Vet worked toward finding a treatment that would cure, or manage, his condition once and for all.

Peppertree's commitment to Django has truly been remarkable. Peppertree stuck by him, and us, through what proved to be a very trying time. Having failed to rout the Demodex using two traditional treatments, Ivermectin and Mitaban, Dr. Wolfe, of the Shaker Veterinary Clinic, decided to try a new medicine: Advantage Multi.

Known overseas as Advocate Advantage Multi, this treatment is a monthly spot-on anti-parasitic drug that has been approved for the treatment of Demodectic mange in several other countries although in the United States it has only been approved for use against heartworm, intestinal worms, fleas and ticks. The difficulty with the Advantage treatment was that it would take months of treatments before there could be any reasonable assurance that the treatment was having the desired effect. In other words, Django would appear to get much sicker before he got well. About a week after each monthly treatment it seemed that the

Demodex mites would go crazy as their host environment was rendered toxic to them.

Django, meanwhile, would lose more hair, and blood while Dr. Wolfe struggled to find a balance of other medications, antibiotics and steroids, to manage the fallout of the panicked mites. During this ferocious battle Peppertree continued to support our efforts to stabilize Django's health. The support and patience of Peppertree and Dr. Wolfe during the spring and early summer of 2007 were instrumental in bringing Django into the state of equilibrium he enjoys today.



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Pet Insurance: Does your pooch need a policy?

MARGARET BOUGHTON

Science has proven that pet ownership is wonderful for human health, but it can also be expensive. The joy of opening your home can often, through pet illness or accidents, be a trying and difficult time in more ways than one. Now, in my household my vet care bills are higher than my own medical bills and my pets see the vet more than I see my own doctor. Granted we have two humans in the household versus six pets of our own.

The medical costs can be high, for instance a cat with a thyroid condition, or a dog with arthritis, can result in treatment costs in the thousands of dollars. Accidents and illnesses are a risk our pets are exposed to by daily living in our world. The top ten claims paid out for the month of July 2007 from one insurance company ranged from \$1,200 to \$6,000. As you can see, the results of one or more accidents or illness can be financially devastating to a family.

A possible solution to unexpected or chronic medical costs is pet insurance. How much are you willing, or able, to spend on your pet? This is one of the most important questions to ask when considering pet insurance. There are pros and cons to the issue that must be analyzed before purchasing a policy.

It is a decision that needs to be based on the individual needs of your household. Again, I had mentioned that I have six pets at home. I have opted to purchase coverage for only three of my pets. That was based on their ages, and pre-existing conditions, as well as what my budget for premiums would allow.

I would recommend that you speak with your own Vet to see what they would recommend for you as well as with a Pet Insurance Carrier who may best suit your needs. You'll find when researching that there are many companies to choose from. However, another option for the disciplined saver is to put some money aside on a regular basis into an account solely for your pet's health care needs. Whatever best suits your needs and financial style, don't be caught off guard when it comes to your pet's health, they are counting on you. 🐾



Pros

- It can be quite affordable. In some cases the cost is as low as \$99 a year for a discount type of pet HMO coverage.
- It may also help with the cost of vaccinations and regular maintenance such as heartworm and flea/tick preventatives.
- You will not be caught financially unprepared with medical bills, forcing you to make a painful decision between the cost of treatment and your family pet.

Cons

- In some cases it may not be affordable. Some pet insurance policies can be as high as \$500 annually.
- It may not cover certain breed specific conditions, or pre-existing conditions.
- In some cases you will have to pay all expenses up front and then have to wait for reimbursement.

Una's Journey of Loss and Love

MARY ELLEN GRIMALDI

Some of you may recognize Una's name from our Holiday Appeal letter. Her story is one that should be told in a bit more detail. The first six or so years of her life are unknown to Peppertree, but we are very gratified to be able to tell about her most recent chapter. Una's owners were moving and could not, or chose not to bring her with them.

The family's neighbors knew Una, and since to know her is to love her, they decided to take her in and add her to their two and four-legged family. After a couple years Una's new family received a very bad human health diagnosis, and were told by doctors that all pets had to be out of the house immediately. Word of their plight and of Una's urgent need for a new home soon reached Peppertree.

Una spent one night in a local shelter and as quickly as possible she was evaluated by a Peppertree volunteer and deemed to be the kind of dog we consider to be one of our "specialties:" middle aged or older, not a flashy sought after breed, so unlikely to be snatched up quickly for adoption in a shelter situation, but as comfortable as an old shoe, and of a friendly, peaceful, and loving nature.

At Una's first clinic she quickly endeared herself to her foster mom and has earned the label of all-time favorite

foster. Foster Mom Lisa Nelson had this to say about Una:

She came in here and acted comfortable, like she always lived here. She wasn't scared, worried, or anxious. She was at home. That part was wonderful. You know how fosters can be. It's very trying. They always have a period of time when they are feeling

their way around, needy, worrying, anxious, having accidents, fighting with the current inhabitants, etc. None of that with Una. She was secure in who she was. She said I'm Una, I like me and I know you will too. It was wonderful. Can a dog be secure, have a high self-esteem. I think that is how she projects herself. She never seemed worried. It was like she knew it was going to be all right.



Mitzi fights with everyone. Mitzi never once fought with Una. No reason to. She was accommodating, non-threatening, team player, and a true sister.

Una made just one clinic appearance, bearing

in mind that Peppertree is committed to keeping a dog in a foster home for as long as it takes for the dog to find a forever home that will be the perfect match. Karl, who had lost his beloved dog of 16 years a few years earlier, attended his first Peppertree

clinic on this particular day. It was love at first sight and those of us who saw it will always remember with a smile the sight of Una riding off to her new life in the passenger seat of her Dad's pickup.

This story typifies the situation with which

Peppertree is so happy to assist: a quick intervention for an older dog in need who can easily and without too much stress find a new family to love. Una is Karl's girl, and his treasured companion. Her foster mom still gets photos and notes to update her, and it is wonderfully clear that Una's tale is a "happily ever after" one. 🐾



Facts you should know about Rawhide chew toys

CAROL McNALLY

With so many available chew toys on the market today, there is a growing concern regarding the overall safety of our pets. Many dog lovers question if rawhide chews are a viable solution for their dog's chewing needs. Rawhide can be a great resource for active chewers, but ultimately the key to keeping your dog out of harm's way is properly supervising and contacting your veterinarian if problems arise. The ASPCA encourages guardians to "actively observe their dog while chewing and to immediately consult a veterinarian if their pet consumes a chunk of chew material."

There is really no easy answer when it comes to rawhides, as there is no one chew treat that is safe and appropriate for all dogs. There are numerous benefits to rawhide chewing, including promoting good dental hygiene, providing little to no clean up and boasting an excellent outlet for extreme chewers. Dogs can be occupied for hours with rawhides, which is any owner's dream come true! However, there can also be potential problems associated with chewing rawhides including; intestinal blockages, health issues resulting from the chemicals used to preserve the chews and possessive behavior. This article will outline both the pros and cons of rawhide chews, so each pet owner can decide if rawhide is appropriate for their individual dog.

PROS:

- 1) **Dental Benefits** – Infections, kidney and heart disease can result when poor dental health gives bacteria a way to enter your dog's body. As most dogs love to chew, rawhides provide optimal benefits for your canine's teeth by reducing tartar and diminishing bad breath. As rawhide is chewed and then moistened, it wraps around the teeth and rubs off the plaque and built-up calculi that has accumulated over the years. Rawhide is a good supplement to your veterinarian's overall dental regimen for your dog. According to the American Veterinary Dental Society, research has shown that daily rawhide chewing can be as beneficial as brushing.
- 2) **Good Chewing Outlet** – Many dogs don't get enough mental stimulation during the day to prevent them from getting anxious or bored. Behavior problems are nearly always the result when dogs don't have the proper outlet for their boundless energy. Dogs who are not allowed to chew rawhides may decide to chew on furniture or other forbidden items in the house. Rawhide chews will generally keep dogs occupied for hours as they taste so good.
- 3) **Little to No Cleanup** – Unlike other chew toys that crumble all over the floor, there is very little cleanup with rawhides as dogs will usually eat every last portion.

CONS:

As with any chew toy, there can be problems when certain guidelines are not followed. They include:

- 1) **Intestinal Blockages/Choking** - Some dogs swallow pieces that are too large to pass through the gastrointestinal tract, and the undigested pieces can potentially cause an intestinal blockage. Possible symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, rectal bleeding, liquid discharge from the rectum, straining to go to the bathroom, and abdominal pain. If your dog eats a rawhide and shows any of the above symptoms, you should contact your vet immediately.
- 2) **Health Issues Resulting from Chemical Processing** – Rawhides that are white or cream colored can contain chemicals that may be unhealthy for your dog. Some rawhide products can contain salmonella bacteria. Whenever possible, purchase clear, unbleached treats from American or Canadian companies. Specifically within the United States, there are very stringent regulations regarding the production process of these chew toys. Other countries allegedly utilize an arsenic-based preservative, chrome or formaldehyde amongst their ingredients. Try to find a brand that includes a list of ingredients, as some dogs (estimated at approximately 40 %) are allergic to the chemicals used to process the chews. When shopping, also consider buying pressed rawhide, as it is made from layers of beef hide which creates a very thick dog bone. Pressed rawhide typically lasts three to five times longer than regular rawhide. What's important to remember is that millions of

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Rawhide

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these products are imported, and unfortunately it is physically impossible for the FDA to test all the products and production methods utilized.

- 3) Possessive Behavior** – Because rawhides are so incredibly tasty to dogs, they can become very protective of their chews; even friendly dogs that normally would not exhibit any aggressive tendencies. Because the chew can be so addicting, dogs may growl, nip or even bite somebody to protect their prized possession. As a general rule, rawhides are not recommended for multiple dogs in the household (unless they reside in a very dog-savvy home), as in many cases a fight will ensue over the chew. The recommendation is to always supervise chewing activity, particularly if there are children and numerous dogs in the home.
- 4) Diarrhea** – Rawhide should be given in moderation as it does digest very slowly. If given too much at one sitting, your dog can vomit or have diarrhea from the many pieces still sitting undigested in the GI tract, as the tract will have difficulties physically breaking up the rawhide. There is a limit to how many pieces your dog's stomach can digest, and as mentioned above, undigested pieces can eventually cause an intestinal obstruction.

In conclusion, all pet owners need to weigh the benefits and potential risks of giving their dog rawhides based on the individual dog's chewing needs and behaviors. If you opt to give your dog(s) rawhides, always use your best judgment and be there to supervise. 🐾

A new beginning

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There were many times, especially during the early part of 2007, that Django's condition had deteriorated to the point when all appeared lost. Gradually, however, he began a slow ascent to health. You would never guess, looking at him today, the struggles he has suffered. He has a full, beautiful coat and all the strength, stamina and exuberance of the German Shepherd breed.

Django quickly became part of our family and we cannot proclaim loudly enough our thankfulness to Peppertree and Shaker Vet Hospital for their support of this happy, and healthy dog. Although he has had some ups and downs with his health since we've known him there was never any issue with his energy or strength. He takes us for walks around the neighborhood and taxes our strength as he learns about his new world. Django enjoys his new found health as he participates in obedience training with Kathy Rogers from Shaker Vet. Kathy has helped tremendously with teaching Django some manners. Yes, we're still taking classes with Kathy, although at this point Django is a very well behaved boy, ... for the most part. 🐾



WANTED!

School, Youth, & Community Service Groups to fund raise for Peppertree Rescue

Every dollar raised helps save a dog that may not have had a chance at life without the help of Peppertree Rescue. Peppertree volunteers alone cannot raise all of the money needed to run the organization. We need motivated groups looking to do community service projects to raise money for our organization.

For more information on how your group can help Peppertree Rescue, please call the hotline **(518) 435-7425**, and leave your name and phone number.

We Thank You!



(right to left) **Bethlehem Central High School Environmental Club** members **Kaitlyn Scoons**, **Rachel Nolte** and **Kathryn Cloutier**, together with classmate **Katy Harmon**, volunteered to walk dogs waiting for homes at Peppertree's 11/3/07 clinic in Scotia.

Pictured with them are **Bailey**, **Lightning** and **Guinness**.



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A Rescue For Dogs Of Good Temperament