

VGSR *Tails*



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In This Issue

Board Notes	2
Doggie Dough!	2
Save a Police Dog's Life	2
Your Dog's Health	3
Sassafras—From Rescue to Ribbons	3
Balancing Act	6
VGSR's Special Treasure	8
The Legacy We Leave Our Children	9
Hunter's Story	10
So Many Dogs...	10
Life's A Beach	11

...and lots more!

Hello and welcome to *VGSR Tails*, Virginia German Shepherd Rescue's second newsletter. Hats off and a free T-shirt to Amy White who submitted the winning entry in our contest to name this newsletter.

We are (hopefully) now on track to producing a newsletter every quarter. Many thanks to everyone who gave us such wonderful feedback to our premiere edition. If you have adopted a dog from our group and would like to submit an article for publication, please let us know. Even if you have not adopted a dog from us, we would still like to hear from you.

We will be celebrating our third "birthday" in April of 2004. This means we will be eligible to join the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) of the National Capital Area. We have placed more than 500 dogs in their new "forever" homes in the last three years. Our pool of volunteers has grown tremendously and we are grateful to every single person who has helped us with this organization.

Our second annual reunion was held in October at Lake Fairfax Park in Reston, VA. We had a terrific turnout and it was so moving—and very emotional for me—to see all of these happy dogs in attendance with their new families. Our foster families love to have the chance to see their former foster pooches with their new folks. To think that most of these dogs, who are now much beloved family members, would have been killed without the help of VGSR's volun-

teers, just absolutely moves me to tears. We all need to give extra thanks and recognition to these special foster families who open up their homes to house these dogs until they are adopted.

Soon we will be making plans for our next reunion. One event that we plan to add will be a parade of the adopted dogs. Everyone will have a chance to show off their dog to the crowd! If you have any suggestions for an event of something else that you would like to see added to our third reunion, please let us know.

In June we will be participating in the Tour De Cure which is a fundraising bike ride of the American Diabetes Association. VGSR will have a team of riders collecting pledges for the ADA and we will also be hosting a rest stop for the riders. If you are interested in joining our team, please contact our team captain, Eileen Vasquez at eileen@shepherdrescue.org.

We have numerous other events planned in the upcoming months. Please be sure to frequently check the "VGSR Events" section of our web site for specific information about upcoming activities. We sure would not want you to miss out on any of the fun!

Lea

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Newsletter contributions are always welcome. Please send your articles and photos to contact@shepherdrescue.org



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Save a Police Dog's Life

In late September 2003, Virginia German Shepherd Rescue (VGSR) started "Save a Police Dog's Life," a program dedicated to raising money to purchase Level II bullet-proof/stab-resistant vests for the K-9 Unit of the Virginia State Police. VGSR's immediate goal was to purchase 16 vests at a cost of \$600 each.

The advertising for the program took two forms: a scrolling "crawl" that ran during local weather breaks on The Weather Channel and a 30-second television ad that aired on numerous cable channels in Adelphia Cable markets. Because of VGSR's fundraising efforts and the efforts of other kind citizens, in a matter of months the Virginia State Police not only vested 16 active patrol dogs, they also vested two backup patrol dogs. Commenting on the speed of the fundraising efforts, Master Trooper M.V. Moore of the Virginia State Police said, "I cannot believe how successful this was. It is great to know we have citizens in Virginia who care this much about our dogs."

With this kind of success, there is no way VGSR can stop now! The next phase has been activated. VGSR opened the vest program to police departments across the Commonwealth of Virginia. I will keep a running list of police departments in need, and VGSR will prioritize the dispersal of funds among police departments on the active list. It is important to note that 100 percent of the funds earmarked for the police K-9 program goes to saving police dogs' lives.

Let's keep those donations rolling in to give back to our K-9 friends who protect and serve every day by putting their lives on the line for us. Stay up-to-date on VGSR's progress by visiting www.shepherdrescue.org and clicking on "Save a police dog's life."

Amy Hughes

—See page 11 for a list of vest donors—

BOARD NOTES

At the January 2004 annual volunteer meeting we held an election for the offices of treasurer, secretary and three new board members at large.

As a result, *Sue Garrison* was re-elected as secretary, *Mary Anne Drakulic* was re-elected as treasurer, and *Barbie Dodge*, *Beth Kilmer* and *Heidi Morris* were elected as the new board members at large. An advisory board was created that consists of *Dr. Matt Browning*, DVM, *Tom Campbell*, Esquire and *Sean Rogstad*, CPA.

Barbie Dodge is our adoptions coordinator and also one of our most active foster homes. Barbie, who lives in Maryland, drives to almost every one of our adoption events. Beth Kilmer is another very busy foster mom who also drives from Maryland to help us out at adoption events. Heidi Morris, who most of us know from the adoption events, has adopted

two GSDs from VGSR and was also a tremendous help at our reunion. We are delighted to have these three fine ladies help us out by being on the board of VGSR.

Larisa Kirgan is our fundraising coordinator. She has the difficult job of trying to find ways to raise the cash that is so desperately needed to run a rescue. If you have any fundraising ideas, please contact Larisa at larisa@shepherdrescue.org.

We would also like to announce that our new volunteer coordinator is *Lisa McLaughlin*. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with VGSR and have any questions, please get in touch with Lisa at Lisa@shepherdrescue.org.

DOGGIE DOUGH!— The Fundraising Corner

BINGO!

It's that time of year again! VGSR will be holding Basket Bingo on Saturday, May 22nd. Everyone mark your calendars. We want to see everyone there!

Basket Bingo has been a wonderful fundraiser for VGSR...and a notoriously FUN fundraiser! The feature prizes will be high-quality Longaberger baskets filled with goodies. We will also hold raffles and drawings. We believe not only in making dogs happy, but people too! That means lots of prizes.

We are in need of basket sponsors and prize donations. If each of you secured one donation or sponsorship, we could quickly reach our goal.

Basket Sponsorship

Sponsors: It's only \$50 to sponsor a basket! In exchange, the sponsor's name will be announced on Bingo Night, listed in the program and on the web site. It's great advertising. Some ideas....real estate agents, hairdressers, barbers, attorneys, any small business owner...or big business owner!

If you are a small business owner, this is a great way to spread your company name around. Last year, it was a chance for our adopted dog to say thanks to VGSR. That's right! Our VGSR alumni, Amelia, sponsored a basket!

Prize Donations

The sky's the limit! Ideas include gift certificates or goodies from restaurants, clothing stores, spas, pet stores, grocery stores...you name it! So the next time you go to your neighborhood restaurant, ask the manager to donate a gift certificate to Basket Bingo. Bring a picture of your Shepherd, that should win them over!

We have everything you need including sample letters and 501(c)(3) documentation. Please contact me if you have any questions or ideas.

(continued on page 7)

YOUR DOG'S HEALTH

“Growing Pains”

Hello from Virginia Beach. I have been asked to write about problems inherent to the German Shepherd breed. In one of the reference books I use often, I looked up a list of breed predilections for diseases and congenital and hereditary disorders. It listed 39 for the German Shepherd! There is obviously no way for me to even touch on all of these without boring the socks off you all, so I am going to pick one. In the future, if there is a specific condition that interests you, please let me know.

Most of you know that orthopedic disease, specifically hip dysplasia, plagues this breed. There are others that are also commonly encountered. This article will focus on a problem that is very common in German Shepherds and German Shepherd mixes. It is called Panosteitis, a.k.a. “growing pains.” Panosteitis affects the long bones of young dogs, in the age range

of 5–18 months. I have seen it in a dog as young as 2 months and as old as 4 years. The condition seems to predominate in males. Because of the predilection for Shepherds, there is strong suggestion for an inheritable basis. The cause of Panosteitis is unknown.

Dogs with Panosteitis limp. The most commonly affected bone is the ulna, the lower bone in the front leg. The radius, humerus, femur, and tibia (in decreasing order of frequency) can also be affected. It is common for symptoms to come and go, as well as the affected area to shift to another leg. Shifting leg lameness is a very important component of Panosteitis, and can help differentiate it from the other causes of lameness in the juvenile patient. Another important finding is that the pain involves the long part of the bone, not the joint. Taking

radiographs makes the diagnosis. However, it is very common for radiographs to be completely normal at the beginning of the disease process. I often have to repeat radiographs weeks later for comparison in order to make an accurate diagnosis.

Fortunately, Panosteitis is a self-limiting disease. Pain and lameness can last from a few days to several months. Recurrences are very common, and can last up to 2 years of age. Treatment focuses on minimizing pain by reducing inflammation. There are many medications that can be used, too many to list here. Therapy does not reduce the duration of the disease.

I commonly see Panosteitis in the German Shepherd dog. Fortunately, affected dogs have an excellent prognosis for recovery. Have a pleasant Spring!

Dr. B

SASSAFRAS—FROM RESCUE TO RIBBONS

As we reviewed the VGSR web site for a prospective companion, my husband noticed Sassy, a very thin, one year old, 45-pound sable who looked dreadfully sad, as if her spirit had been beaten out of her. She had already been homed once unsuccessfully and looked deplorable, grossly underweight and suffering from mange, ear mites, and weeping eyes. She hung her head and had huge ears that lay flat out the side of her head, resembling an airplane getting ready for take off. I commented how hard it would be to place a dog that looked so broken and lifeless, despite VGSR's write up that she had a sweet disposition. My husband said we should keep an open mind and just look at her along with our other selections. With our list in hand, we were off to PetsMart for VGSR's sponsored adoption day. We were fully prepared to wait as long as necessary for that special dog to come into our life. Little did I know that my husband had an eye for selecting that special dog.

Sassy came into our lives over the Christmas holiday of 2002, with a huge heart but no manners. We immediately initiated our doggie boot camp 101 mode, monitored her every move, and, once she gained confidence and weight, embarked on a routine of exercise and obedience training. Through her willingness to please, Sassy quickly learned to not chew our belongings and inhale food items from the

counter. After a month of working with her alone, we felt she was ready to learn some socializing skills. We enrolled in group obedience classes at South Run Rec Center, which provided the necessary distractions to enforce what she had learned at home. Sassy was making great progress except in one area—housebreaking. Crating for short periods of time with frequent walks—our tried and true method—would not prevent her from soiling her bed. Professionals warned us that once a dog learns to soil in their crate, it is a very difficult habit to break. There were days filled with frustration and after three months I was about to give up. No matter how wonderful Sassy was, we could not live with a dog that wasn't housebroken. Through the advice of our vet, we said we would give her a full six months. We patiently continued to work on the problem. Then, one day, it was as if Sassy knew that she had to make a choice. Patience and perseverance paid off. By April, it was



(continued on page x)

THANK YOU!

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations—

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On a personal note, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for all of the cards, notes and kindnesses that were shown to me last year following the deaths of my two beloved dogs, Josey and Deja Vu. I still have a huge, aching hole in my heart, but so many of you fine folks touched me with your generous support that I will never forget it. I have been so blessed to have come in contact with so many wonderful individuals as a result of this rescue. Your support was what got me through those dark days and I will always be grateful. VGSR certainly came to my rescue.

Lea

BALANCING ACT

If I were a writer, my stories would always have happy endings. As a dog trainer and behavior consultant, I don't always have happy endings. This story does have a great ending, in spite of the shaky start. I am always grateful to owners who are willing to try a 'different' way of doing things; it's too bad that some folks wait until the dog is in big trouble to make a change in his lifestyle.

Meet Jed, a 98#, 3-year-old GSD selected as a family pet for a household with 3 kids. Jed was the size and color the family wanted; his high energy and edginess was attributed to his great health. They felt very good about their purchase. Appropriate temperament was never considered.

Jed ran after the kids through the house, barked at the doorbell, barked at squirrels, ran at the windows to track birds, not to mention creating an uproar when people walked by the house. His behavior was attributed to his being a young, healthy herding dog. Jed started to spend more and more time outside, where he had 'room to run' and things to chase inside his three acre yard, surrounded by an electronic containment device. He was thought to be much happier out there. Jed had gone to a puppy class, and sometimes he went in the car, but he no longer got to go to the kids' activities or for walks with Mom because he 'got upset' when people or other dogs came close, becoming increasingly difficult to manage. He spent most of his day outdoors, running the boundaries of his properties, never missing a single change in the environment! His socialization stopped by the time he was 6 months old. And then came puberty!

One day a workman came into the yard to run some cable. Jed ran to him, grabbed his leg, and inflicted multiple bites as the man pushed him away and Jed reconnected. Jed was collected by animal control and quarantined.

I saw Jed when their vet advised them to try some behavior modification instead of the immediate euthanasia they had called to arrange.

Jed's family made it quite clear they didn't hold out much hope for change, especially when they had tried *everything*. Everything included 'send away' school that offered to subordinate their dog. Jed didn't get that one at all. The owners reported that he was actually worse after that school; he tried to bite people he used to be okay with. Then they thought they would take him to a trainer who had worked with hundreds of GSDs in the police department. What Jed got was more prongs, more shocks, more correction. What the owners got was more aggression. That's when they called the vet.

When coming to our school, Jed put on quite a show! He showed me lots of lunging, barking and then waiting for a reaction, then repeating former behaviors. I clicked and threw bits of meatball towards him. He started looking for the meat after he heard the click, then I waited until

he was calm even though I was moving around, then I clicked. Within 20 minutes, I was able to move through the gate (I kept a sturdy fence between us at first), touch him, put a 77head collar on him (that took 2 jars of Gerber baby meat!), and walk him around that room and into an adjoining larger room where other people unknown to him could greet him (he was developing good jar recognition by then!), touch him and then handle him.


Jed showed us he was thrilled to chase a Frisbee and a tennis ball. We put Jed on the "No Free Lunch" system (Want anything? Sit. No sit? No petting, no feeding, no nothin'!). We also gave him lots of supervised exercise. He was not allowed to run endlessly around the yard, practicing his adrenalin-raising charge. He had to sit, then the Frisbee or ball were thrown, then he could go get it, bring it back and sit to get it thrown again. He was taken on daily walks wearing the head collar, and he was given amazing food every time he spotted a stranger. His world got way bigger and he no longer over-reacted to everything. He now has an AKC T.D.X. (tracking dog excellent) title. He and his owner love being outside and the individual event is just right for Jed.

These outstanding owners worked very hard to provide balance for Jed. It took several months to make some changes, and they continue to desensitize him to a variety of stimuli. Jed was all about reactivity, and making poor choices. Physical confrontation, instead of calm communication and clear criteria escalated his aggressive tendencies.

Jed is 8 now. We all learned so much in training him. Mostly about *balance*.

Ruth Chase

Ruth Chase is the owner and training director of the Coventry School for Dogs and Their People in Columbia, MD. Coventry offers behavioral consultations and classes for every age and situation, from puppies to "difficult dogs," from agility lessons to "day camp." For more information, call (410) 381-1800 or visit their website at www.thecoventryschool.com.



ANTIQUES
ALONG THE
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Sassafras-continued

all downhill and the struggles were over. We knew she had found her “forever home”.

At that point, Sassy’s obedience training took off and we became a team. In April, she passed her Canine Good Citizen test and we decided to register her through AKC’s Indefinite Listing Privilege program so we could enter shows despite not having papers. Her official AKC name became “Sassafras” and in September we registered for our first novice competition for a “leg” of the Companion Dog (CD) title. To both of our surprise, we brought home the blue ribbon. Adding to our luck, Sassy’s foster mom, Sue, and Lea were monitoring a VGSR booth at the Old Dominion Kennel Club show. When we came up to say hello, they barely recognized Sassy, who they had found on the street just nine months earlier. We were all so proud of Sassy that day. Sassy went on to earn her CD in early October, winning the title in three straight shows and always placing first or second in her classes. We are now training for the next AKC obedience level, “Open,” and we have begun our agility work, which she loves. We are looking forward to

competing in obedience trials this spring. When we are not working, Sassy loves to romp with her training buddies (with a particular fondness for her Rottweiler buddy, Edison, and Golden Retriever friend, Toby). She also loves doggie happy hour in Old Towne, hiking, swimming, going for her morning and afternoon run, helping out with obedience classes at the South Run Rec Center, and doing just about anything that involves being with her mom and dad. It works out well because we love to do things with her.

In December, we donated to VGSR the forty dollars Sassy won while working towards her CD title. While not a huge sum of money, it is her way of saying, “Thank you VGSR for giving me a second chance.” My husband and I will never be able to thank VGSR enough for bringing her into our life. Every morning when Sassy gives me a nudge to tell me it is time for our four mile run, I smile and think how lucky I am to have such a great friend. Rain or shine we always go for our jog. It is our special time and I wouldn’t dare let down my best friend who is always there for me.

Mary Denigan-McCauley & Mark MaCauley

FUNDRAISING FOR ALL!

If love alone could run VGSR, we would rarely hit a bump in the road. Unfortunately, we need funding too. Our dogs need food, medical care and supplies. Often we don’t have enough fosters, so we take on kennel fees. VGSR has saved many dogs that others saw as lost causes. They now lead wonderful lives. To continue this work, fundraising has to play a large role in our organization.

Please read on and see how you can help!

Restaurant Nights = Food, Fun and \$\$ for VGSR

VGSR has agreements with certain restaurants to donate a percentage of your purchase to VGSR. Visit the Current Events page on the VGSR web site for more information.

www.igive.com = Shopping for a good cause!

Sign up with www.igive.com and shop online through their web site. The stores will give a percentage to the charity of your choice...(hint, hint...Virginia German Shepherd Rescue!!). There are a lot of stores to choose from including: Target, Sharper Image, PetSmart, Disney Store, JC Penney, Barnes & Noble, and on and on.

Car donations

Thinking of selling or trading an old car, truck, boat, or RV? Why not donate it and save the hassle. VGSR can really use the donation and we will provide you with a tax-deductible donation receipt. It’s easy to do. With one phone call to (703) 437-1534, a professionally licensed,

bonded and insured towing company will pick up the vehicle within 3 to 4 days. Questions? Contact Bruce Sklar at bsklar@writeme.com

Food Lion

VGSR is registered as a charitable organization with Food Lion. If you have a Food Lion MVP card, please go to www.foodlion.com, to the Lion Shop & Share fundraising section, and link your MVP Customer card to VGSR.

Yard Sale

We will hold 2 yard sales this year. The dates are yet to be determined. While you do your spring cleaning, please store any items for our yard sale...clothing, toys, furniture, utensils, books, almost anything is welcome. Last year, we even sold a kitchen sink! For questions: contact@shepherdrescue.org or 703-435-2840

Donations

And remember we are always looking for donations of high-quality dog food, portable crates, blankets, dog treats, rawhide bones, collars, leashes, flea, tick, and heartworm preventative, towels, moving pads/quilted blankets, dog toys, tennis balls, postage stamps and of course, cash to defray the cost of feeding, housing, and providing medical care for dogs in need of good homes.

Larisa

Larisa@shepherdrescue.org

VGSR'S SPECIAL TREASURE



You've heard the expression, "one man's trash is another man's treasure"? It is the credo of every yard sale aficionado, and often the words by which rescue dogs live. Such is the case with our beautiful mascot dog Sable. This treasure came into our rescue at of all places, a yard sale.

Almost three years ago, a young military family decided they did not have the time to properly care for their young German Shepherd. They drove her up to Northern Virginia to surrender her to VGSR, and she was welcomed into the rescue as our first dog. The newly formed group assembled at a yard sale for the exchange, and recognized Sable as the treasure she was.

Not only had VGSR hit the jackpot, but so had Sable. Soon she was paired with Emmitt and Sandra Harlan. The Harlans live in Stafford, Virginia, and knew that they could provide Sable with what she needed. Now she is a cherished member of their family. After he adopted Sable, Mr. Harlan made a remark we will always remember. "The only way that she will ever leave us is when God takes her from us."

Sable loves playing in her big fenced yard, and has come back to visit us at several adoption days. She has made an appearance at both of our annual reunions, and her image graces our merchandise, forms and letterhead. She is indeed a yard sale treasure that will always be a very special part of VGSR.

Beth Kilmer

An ode to a tireless, ball-obsessed shepherd named Delilah (fka Amp), a VGSR alumnus.

Peace

Ping, pong the ball bounces
and rolls under the bed.

Bark, bark the shepherd yells
blood rushing to Beth's head.

Run, run the shepherd sprints
bounding after the ball.

Click, clack goes the door lock
leaving the dogs out in the hall.

Hank Kilmer

To Virginia German Shepherd Rescue:

As I am writing this, my new best friend is lying next to me on the floor! When Jim and I began our search for a German shepherd we decided, after a lot of research, that VGSR was the best way to find the perfect dog for us. We did have some interaction with a few dogs, and it was hard not to take them all home with us. But we felt that we would know when the right dog for us came along. It wasn't a long wait when we received a call about a dog that needed a home.

As we drove to the foster home, we were very excited and we hoped that this would be the dog. Of course, when we approached, the dog barked and he didn't want anything to do with us. Yet, he was a beautiful four-year-old long-haired German shepherd, then called Max 2. We liked the looks of him right away. Now, we needed to find out if he would be okay with our children. Jim has owned GSDs before, but I have not. I left the decision up to him, and he felt that he would fit into our family. So there we were, driving away with a dog in the back of our truck.

We hardly slept that night because we were so worried about the dog and how he was doing. We call our dog MoJo. For the first two days he was very unsure of us and he was protective of only himself. He didn't like to be brushed, and didn't want us near his food. As we took care of him, we all started to bond in our own ways with MoJo.

Before long he took over protecting the family and the house. We get so many compliments on MoJo. People love the way he looks, and he turned out to be so friendly to everybody. He just hates squirrels! MoJo has fit into our family beyond our expectations and we have VGSR to thank for that. It was the caring people who helped us every step of the way in finding us the new member of our family. Thanks!



Corinne Grunewald

THE LEGACY WE IN RESCUE LEAVE OUR CHILDREN

Prestatement By Mom, Sue Garrison:

I just wanted to share a story my daughter Carolena (then age 11) wrote in school and I just happened across it in her backpack. For anyone wondering what kind of a legacy working with the Rescue leaves for our children...just read this story! (Of course Mom had to spell properly or you wouldn't be able to figure it out.

	By: Carolena Garrison
○	One day there was a shepherd in a shelter named Lex and next to her was a cocker spaniel named Beemer. The shelter was very cruel like they had a meal once a week. One night Lex said I'm getting out of here. She turned to Beemer and said are you with me? Yes said Beemer, so they started to bark. You know when a dog barks the person who is taking care of the dog has to come when the dog barks, so the person came and opened the door. Lex said run Beemer and they ran off and the shelter people chased after them, but they ran and hid until the shelter people passed by. Next a car drove by and saw Lexus and stopped and picked her up, but Lexus said what about my friend Beemer? The lady, whose name was Dot, said sure bring your friend too. Then Dot drove home and called her friend who had a german shepherd rescue and said do you want this nice female shepherd? Her friend said why yes, she sounds great. Dot drove Lexus to her friends house and dropped her off, but her friend said oh, what about the other dog Beemer? Dot said don't worry about Beemer because I have another friend who does cocker spaniel rescue so after I leave here I'll take him over there and he will be fine. So after Dot left Lexus there she drove Beemer to the cocker spaniel rescue where they took him in. Two weeks later Dot got a call from VGSR saying they had found Lexus a good home with kids and other dogs. The next day Dot got another call and it was cocker rescue and they said Beemer found a nice home where there were kids. Dot was very pleased because she knew if she didn't stop and help these two dogs they would still be in the cruel shelter.
	The End.

THE SHADOW KNOWS!

My husband, daughter and I had a beautiful German Shepherd dog for 14 years. Actually Dusty was part of the family before my daughter was. Dusty was a wonderful, loyal dog that we were blessed to have for 14 years. In October, our beloved Dusty got very sick and she had to be put down. We wanted another GSD, because they are such wonderful dogs and I always thought I would rescue when the time came. I wanted a puppy because of having a daughter who was 11, and that way they could bond and we would not have issues with bringing in an older dog.

I contacted the local GS rescue agencies (MD, Mid-Atlantic, and VA) with my request for a puppy. I was told that puppies were hard to come by but fortunately VA had a litter of 4 puppies being fostered in Germantown, MD (where I live). We filled out all the forms and were contacted by the foster mom. She brought the two puppies not yet spoken for. Well, it was wonderful seeing these puppies and, of course, we fell in love instantly. We picked a female named Sidney, who we renamed Shadow. We are having the best time with her—she is such a joy.

Adopting is such a fulfilling experience, knowing not only you saved a dog (or puppy), but you also get the love of a very special dog. Thank you VGSR! Shadow is very much a part of our family. We look forward to many years of happiness with her.

Jean Bender

YET ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY...

Max, formerly known as Max Spencer, is doing great! He is up to 105 pounds of excitable shepherd. Max has progressed nicely with his obedience training, and will do ANYTHING for praise. He is a joy to have around the house (though sometimes he forgets how big he is, and that he has a big tail attached to his rear!). He seems happy to have a big acre of yard to run around in. He likes to do laps around the yard when we first go outside.

He is getting along well with other dogs, and has become very attached to my girlfriend and me. He does have a bit of an alpha streak, but his desire to please seems to over-

come it. Max is a great addition to our household. I feel safe leaving my girlfriend at home at night when I go to work, knowing how protective he is of her and our home.

I think that is was a wise decision to adopt Max. I believe we have a better dog than those who go to “breeders.” I know that I was comfortable in the adoption process, due in no small part to Max’s foster mom, Carolina. She really helped solidify my decision to take Max home.

Thanks again,
John Saunders

HUNTER'S STORY: DIARY OF A RESCUE

8/7 Hunter was found chained to a park bench on Capital Hill. He was covered in sores from a skin infection and more than 25 pounds underweight. The animal control officer that found him thought he may have been living with a homeless man. She took him to the shelter, but it was decided he would never be a candidate for adoption. Who would adopt a dog in this condition? He was considered a stray and put in a back cage, out of the public view. He was allowed to eat 3 times a day, while he waited out the 5 days of his stray period. There was always chance someone would come to claim him, but everyone knew noone would come for Hunter.

8/9 A temperament test was partially administered by the shelter. Hunter was nervous, and had a double ear infection. The test was inconclusive because part of the test required his ears to be touched. He would not allow it. Hunter patiently waited in his cage, not knowing there was a countdown with his life at stake.

8/10 A part time staff member found him by mistake, in the distant cage, and spent some time with him. She fell in love with his gentle, easy going personality and suggested someone call VGSR.

8/12 When the VGSR volunteer arrived at the animal shelter, Hunter was sound asleep, in his quiet run, in the stifling afternoon heat. He seemed depressed and acted as if he had accepted his fate. After all, this was day 5, scheduled to be his last day. What if the VGSR volunteer didn't like him? The staff was hoping for the best for Hunter.

Hunter slowly got up and allowed a leash to be put around his neck. What did he have to lose? He walked out to the field with the 2 ladies, sniffed everything and became more interested in this opportunity to stretch his long legs. The ladies touched, petted and hugged Hunter until he responded with a smile. He trotted around the field, with increased enthusiasm. Chasing the balls they threw for him, he became even more excited. For a four year old dog, this was a brand new experience. What fun. He jumped, chased and ran like a puppy.

8/14 Hunter was released to the VGSR volunteer. His first visit to the vet involved a search for every known parasite that could be causing the skin problems and weight loss. Hunter was so thin the possibility of a neuter was still weeks away. First, Hunter would get healthy in his new foster home. Then, he would look for his forever home.

Hunter began enjoying the first day of the rest of his life. He now lives with a family in Arlington, Virginia.

Bobbie Cascio

VGSR notes: Hunter's story describes what we do. We take German Shepherds from animal shelters. These dogs are not disposable. They are living, breathing creatures that are in helpless situations. We make them healthy and teach them what we can. We devote our free time and energy to help these wonderful dogs become part of a loving family. Without supporters like you, we could not continue our work.

SO MANY DOGS...WHICH ONE IS FOR US?

The year was 2002. We decided we wanted a German Shepherd. After seeing a beautiful GSD at the Fairfax shelter, I fell in love. But that dog was not to be for us. Another family came to adopt her while we were there. On the way home my kids and I stopped at Giant and, while there, we saw an ad for the German Shepherd Rescue's Basket Bingo. So, we went home and looked them up on the web. We started reading about all the wonderful dogs. After e-mailing Lea back and forth a few times, she suggested we take a look at Princess #2. I looked her up on the site and, once seeing her, I felt that she was the dog for us. We were at the adoption event the very next day to meet her.



Princess shortly after her rescue.



Princess today.

Now, I have to say she was not a pretty sight. She was very skinny and a bit of a sorry sight. There were so many other dogs to pick, but, looking in her eyes I knew it was Princess #2 that we were suppose to get for our forever dog! Princess was rescued by another group before being turned over to VGSR. She was almost dead. They had to carry her into the vet's office to be treated. She had had 5 puppies and I believe 3 of them died. Poor Princess had a hard, young life...she was only 13 months old when we got her. But, now, she lives a great life with us in Reston, VA. We love her to pieces and she is such a faithful and loyal friend to all of us. She is no longer skinny. She looks just wonderful!

Thanks to everyone who cared for Princess until we found her!

Patti Schoenwetter

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LIFE'S A BEACH!

ON BEING A BACKHOE

By Duke Leto, Dog of Dune (as told to Elizabeth Gregory)

Mom is thinking about renting me out as a backhoe. There's lot of building going on in Chick's Beach (a section of Virginia Beach) and since I don't require gas (which pollutes the environment—internal combustion engines being stinky), she hit on the idea that I could earn a living doing what I do best. Digging! A couple of cans of dog food, and I can dig a hole that puts the Grand Canyon to shame. What took the Colorado River a millennium, I can do in a couple of hours. And in sand, too!

She got the idea when she went outside and stepped into a pit deep enough to entrap a woolly mammoth. (Picture the La Brea Tar Pits with one of the tusky, long-nosed critters gazing over the top lip). Ma said the yard looked like Baghdad.

I moved to Virginia Beach in February of 2003. Ma and Dad had lost their two German Shepherds, Raven and Rommel within a couple of months of each other, didn't want to do the "puppy thing" again and, realizing a lot of good dogs need homes, decided to adopt. Virginia German Shepherd Rescue put us together. I was eight months old at the time, and had been busted for barking.

Maybe Ma and Dad didn't want to do the "puppy thing," but I hadn't done it the first time. I had just been sprung from a ten by ten dog run, and I was ready to taste the high life of a family and house dog.

Unfortunately, being over 100 lbs with teeth like a T-Rex, when I did my "puppy thing," items got destroyed.

I also developed Separation Anxiety which, I understand, is quite common in rescue dogs. Makes sense to me. Think about it. When you end up in a shelter or eating out of garbage cans or lose the only home you've ever known and you finally get to be a house dog in a good home with plenty of food and kind people petting you, wouldn't you be a lit-

tle "anxious" if those people suddenly vanished? Wouldn't you be worried that you'd been abandoned again? Or lost your home? Or that you might end up in a shelter? Or out on the road dodging semis? I sure didn't want to go back to that ten by ten kennel with a doghouse. Ask Donald Trump or John Kerry. You get used to luxury pretty fast!

So, when Ma and Dad left me, I kinda went bananas. I pulled the coat rack out of the wall and bit the coats and my leash. I stole the portable telephone and gnawed it up—all but the bell.

I got into a lot of mischief those first few weeks, going so far as to devour a green plastic flower pot which earned me a trip to the Vet's for a rectal exam. You can bet your bippy I didn't tear up any more flower pots!

Ma and Dad hung in with me and now my regression into puppyhood and my separation anxiety both seem to have subsided. So I guess what I'm saying to any humans who might be reading this is don't give up on us too quickly. Some of the stuff we do might seem overly destructive, but maybe we're just doing the "puppy thing" we weren't allowed to do as puppies and it seems worse because we're big. Or maybe we tear things up out of fear that you've left us and aren't going to come back.

Having had it, I suggest if Separation Anxiety seems to be a problem, look into crate training us. There's also a "dog appeasing pheromone" called "Comfort Zone" which Ma and Dad saw advertised and bought at Pets-Mart. It doesn't help all dogs, but Ma thinks it helped me. Who knows what stopped my acting out? Maybe I grew out of it. Maybe I was testing them to see if they'd give me back. You know, the way some older adopted kids do. Maybe I just wanted to know whether they really loved me. Or then again, it could have been the "Comfort Zone." Whatever it was, I'm doing great, and thank VGSR for finding me my forever home.



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