

# VGSR *Tails*

Vol. 3, No. 1

Spring 2006

## Upcoming Events

**Basket Bingo!** Our ever-popular Basket Bingo will be held on April 22 at the Herndon Moose. Doors open at 5:30; Bingo begins at 7:00.

We're still looking for basket sponsors.

**May 6—Pet Fiesta at the Reston Town Center from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.**

**Adoption days (Noon to 3:00 p.m.)**  
April 9, 15, 23, 30  
May 7, 13, 21  
June 4, 11, 18, 25

Please check the web site for adoption day locations, any last-minute changes to the schedule, as well as additional news and events.

**A** warm hello to all of the wonderful friends of VGSR. We are approaching our fifth official birthday and going strong. We are pretty close to hitting the big 1,000 mark on the dogs we have placed through this fine organization. You would certainly think that things would slow down since we have placed all of these dogs, but the sad reality is that we are busier than ever.

It just never seems to let up, even the slightest bit. I guess with the extreme popularity of our beloved breed this is not going to change any time soon.

Good news...our Katrina dogs, Mardi and Gras (Gracie) have been adopted, together (insert big smile here) and are now in their new home in the Virginia Beach area. Thanks to all of you who contributed to Mardi's veterinary expenses, which were quite substantial. It is so wonderful that they got to stay together. We should have a huge round of applause for the awesome foster mom, Helga Davies, and their new adoptive family the McCormacks, who were big-hearted enough to keep this sweet pair of pooches together. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Mardi and Gras, they were found swimming together in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. They were emaciated, exhausted and had skin infections, but with lots of tender loving care from Helga and top-notch veterinary attention, they both pulled through. It is indeed a huge triumph that these survivors got to stay together after all they have been through.

Unfortunately, the cold rains prevailed upon our 2005 reunion and the attendance was only about 1/3 of previous years, but the hardy souls who braved the weather all had a good time. We all greatly enjoyed the Schutzhund demonstration that was given by the Blitzberg Hundesport



Club. We are going to be a little smarter this year and have a rain date in advance just in case the weather decides to be uncooperative again.

Please join me in congratulating our newly elected Treasurer, Sheri Zenke! After four years of hard work, Mary Anne Drakulic has passed the treasurer's duties to the capable hands of Sheri. I would personally like to thank Mary Anne for her countless hours of work for VGSR. She always did a terrific job and as a result of her efforts we are one of the few groups around that actually operates in the black. Sue Garrison has graciously agreed to remain as secretary for another term. Our new board of directors includes Glenda DaCosta, Debbie Thomas and Erica Stoecker. We are so very lucky to have such an awesome team of folks helping to run this rescue.

On a very sad note, John and I had to send our beloved, beautiful Moochie to the Rainbow Bridge on February 16th. Thanks very kindly to all of you who sent the notes, cards and emails that helped us to get through a horrible time. It helps so much to have such a wonderful circle of friends that understand the devastation of losing one of our furry family members. I have to say, there will NEVER be another dog that even comes close to Moochie. We love and miss him very much.

Virginia German Shepherd Rescue, Inc.  
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Newsletter contributions are always welcome. Please send your articles and photos to contact@shepherdrescue.org

Lea

## FAILING FOSTERING 101 AND 102 (ON PURPOSE)...

**A**fter being owned by Bacardi for about nine years (I was trying to buy a washer and dryer, but came home with a German shepherd puppy instead—the best washer and dryer I have ever owned), I decided that maybe adding another dog would bring him out of his depression. Poor guy, his health problems were wreaking havoc on his body, and that’s about all he could focus on. He was diagnosed at about a year and a half with massive allergies...grass, trees, etc. When he got older, we added dust, mold, and mildew to the long list. That’s where my plan came in, fostering until a good match could be found and, of course, there was the honey factor: it’s not really a 2nd dog, you are just saving a life, until a good home can be found (code words for “this dog might just stay forever”). Bobbie, a volunteer, was trying to figure out what dog to place with us. Along came a little pup (I was not looking for a pup) that we judged at about 3 months.

Tyler (now Gin Roomy, pronounced Rummy) as he was named to “break him out of doggie prison” was waiting for me as I pulled up my car one sunny day, and my mouth just dropped. He was the cutest little thing, even though the poor little guy was in such bad shape. He was only 21 pounds, skin and bones, scabs on his nozzle and a “bugger nose”... not to mention that he stunk to high heaven. I fell in love instantly; he sat right in front of me, put his paws on my hands, and just stared into my eyes. I was a goner! That poor little pup had been through so much: he was found as a stray, ended up in the shelter, and they were going to put him down—thank God, VGSR stepped in and saved his little life! And thank you to Bobbie for bringing this furry monster into my life! Most important, he bravely stood up to “big ol’ Bacardi” barking at him like there was no tomorrow. It turned out to be a wonderful match between the old guy and the young pup. Gin Roomy, now weighing in at 100 pounds, just adored Bacardi. Even when Bacardi came down with DM, Roomy never took advantage, he would dutifully roll over when Bacardi “walked” up to him to let him know he was still top dog.

Bacardi—with all of his health problems, and now DM—was still an amazing dog! He did get a little cranky

at the end, but that was to be expected. It just shows how amazing this breed is, and how courageous! Unfortunately I had to make the gut-wrenching decision to have Bacardi put down in September of 2005. My vet was wonderful enough to come to the house and take him over the Rainbow Bridge. And just to prove again how amazing this breed is, and how amazing the bond between the old guy and young guy was, I had put Roomy outside so I could spend a little more time with Bacardi while waiting for the vet to arrive. But I decided to let him back in for a few minutes. It was as if he knew he would not see his buddy again... they kissed and kissed each other like crazy.

My mind was also made up to get another dog, to save another life in Bacardi’s honor. So of course I volunteered right away to be a foster home again, waiting for the right match. I fostered about 3 dogs and as usual fell in love with every single one, but realizing that my home was not the right one. So along came foster number 4—a sable 2-year-old named King. It took me a while to make up my mind; I really wanted to make sure that we were the right home for him. And seeing the two monsters together confirmed that, yes, we are the right home! Every day since I made the decision to add King as another family member in February 2006, I see the bond grow and grow.

So that’s how I failed fostering 101 and 102 on purpose. Saving an animal’s life is the greatest thing you can do, seeing them come straight from the shelter, seeing their happiness as they realize that humans can be good, and then finding them the perfect home—it makes it all worth while! If you have ever thought of fostering, do it! You just never know, you might end up failing fostering 101, 102, 103.....



*Nicole Regele*

**A special thank you to our energetic and cheerful  
newsletter coordinator,  
Rick Grossman,  
and our exhausted and cranky editor,  
Carol Levie.  
We couldn’t have done it without you!**

**Congratulations** to our very own  
Lea Spickler, who was named Volunteer of the  
Month in March by WGMS (104.1 FM),  
Washington’s Classical Music radio station  
(and the highest rated commercial classical station  
in the United States)!  
*Way to go, Lea!!*

## THE DAY I ALMOST RESIGNED FROM RESCUE AND THE DOG THAT ALMOST CAUSED IT TO HAPPEN: PART 2

The saga of Georgy Girl continues...“she bit my heiny” was what my neighbor, who lives across the street, said to me as he was rubbing his derriere through his sweat pants. Oh crap—Georgy had made it over the wall, again. Now you would think that a dog that walked as funny as Georgy (due to a rear leg that had been badly broken and was not repaired before it healed on its own) would not be nearly as proficient at getting over a four-foot fence as she was. It was not a graceful sight, watching her struggle up and over, but you’ve got to give the dog credit, she is FAST! “Well,” I told him, “she didn’t tear your pants—are you sure she bit you?” “They might not be torn, but I know that I’ve got a bruise—do you want to see?” he replied. “No, No, that’s alright, I believe you,” I said knowing that I really did NOT want to see the evidence on his bare behind.

It seems that the dogs had been outside doing what dogs do best when they are outside (or perhaps it is just best WHEN they do it outside). Anyway, in her usual manner, Georgy Girl hopped the fence and was waiting patiently by John’s car in the driveway when our poor, unwary neighbor tried to do as a good deed by telling us that Georgy appeared to be on the wrong side of the fence. As his tempting buttocks passed her to reach our front door, she gave the right one a nip. Thank doG it was just a nibble and not a bad injury, and also that our neighbor was a good sport about the whole incident. We paid him off by having John do a small repair job on his furnace pro bono.

OK, now that our beloved, resident crazy dog has turned into a certified butt biter, we would have to take drastic action about the fencing issue. For those who did not read my previous article, Georgy possesses the talent of being able to open any sliding glass door at Mach-one speed. If you forget, for an instant, to put the pin lock in the door, you can absolutely count on Georgy to open that blessed door. It is helpful when another dog needs to “gwout to potty” as we say, because Georgy is only too happy to help. It is not so helpful when she opens the door to the wintry weather and lets all of our heat escape into the great outdoors. A couple of weeks ago I was TRYING to bring my new foster dog, Archie, inside for the first time. Since I was alone, and there were already five other dogs in house, I decided that it would be best to evict the majority of them into the backyard until I could get poor scared Archie situated. So I left him in the car, waded through the pack of frenzied barking dogs in my foyer, slipped the pin lock out of the sliding glass door and tossed them all outside, except for Georgy. I ran back out the front door and dragged poor, uncooperative Archie (could you blame him? he heard all of those barking beasts from within the car) across the threshold. Just as I ALMOST had him inside, dear old Georgy OPENS the sliding glass door and lets all of the other dogs back INSIDE. So now I have a totally panic-stricken new dog, desperately trying to get back

out the front door, which was still half open, when five other madly barking GSDs come charging up the steps and into the very small foyer (it is quite crowded with three GSDs so you can just imagine how congested it was with SIX!) Thanks, Georgy, I could have done without your help on this one! I can laugh about it now, but at the time, I was really in quite a panic.



Back to the need for a fence—since Georgy’s ability to open doors is second only to her ability to scramble over the fence, we knew we had to take quick and drastic action to ensure our good standing in the neighborhood. So, we call the fence people and six grand later (and poorer!) we have an absolutely beautiful, six-foot tall, solid wood board-to-board privacy fence installed. Since our house sits on a corner lot, we now officially look like the Waco compound. We feel safe, we feel secure. My first thought is how wonderful it will be to never have to worry about a new foster dog hopping over my old fence and disappearing (as had happened several times before). And we should never have to worry about crazy Georgy and her shenanigans again. Or would we????

Here we are, admiring our new fence from the outside, and lo and behold, much to our amazement (and dismay) here comes Georgy. She managed to open the gate of the new fence. Took her all of a couple of seconds to figure it out. Can you believe this dog??

So, in order to keep Georgy, and the neighborhood safe, we have to lock the gate. It is really a pain to have to come inside, unlock the sliding glass door, go around the side of the house and then unlock the gate on the fence, just to be able to get into the back yard, but if that is what it takes to contain her, so be it. We love you Georgy! I wonder what she’ll think of next.

Lea

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## A STRAY DOG STORY

Once upon a time a litter of puppies was born to parents of impressive lineage, bred for intelligence, spirit, strength, and courage. One by one the puppies went to new homes where they would be show dogs. Except one. He went to live with a couple that wanted a companion and pet. His new family loved and cared for him as he grew, but he longed to go places and do things. There was an exciting world out there beyond the edge of the yard. One day when he was about nine months old, he was playing outside with his family when he saw a deer. At that very moment, someone was going through the gate. He seized the opportunity and pushed through the gate. He ran as fast as he could into the woods after the deer. His family called him, but he ignored them and kept going. He was enjoying the freedom and thrill of the chase too much to stop. After a while, he started to get tired and hungry. It was then that he realized he didn't know where he was or how to get back home.

This young dog had a very positive attitude though, and decided he could make it on his own. As the days turned into weeks and months, he learned to hunt, scavenge, steal, and beg so he could survive. He drank from streams and puddles. He slept under shrubs, in piles of leaves, or tunneled into forest undergrowth. He learned to be quiet and not call attention to himself. In the summer he was hot, thirsty, and hungry. In the winter he was cold, hungry, and lonely. Food was scarce and he lost weight. The tips of his ears and the end of his tail froze. But he drew from his strong will to survive and soldiered on.

Then one day in the early spring, he realized he didn't feel too healthy anymore. He didn't have the energy and stamina he used to have. It took much more of an effort to hunt now. He decided it was time to find somewhere to settle down, at least until he felt better.

One day a man approached him and offered food. The man talked to him and patted the top of his head, then slipped something around his neck. The man took him to a noisy place filled with other dogs. He was afraid, but decided to try to make the best of his situation. He was friendly to the people there, and they fed him, talked to him, and pet-

ted him. He passed the long hours by thinking. He could no longer remember how old he was. A year and a half maybe, but certainly no more than two. He tried not to worry too much about what might happen to him in this place.

After about two weeks a man came to see him, and thus began a new chapter in the dog's life. After a few long car rides, he was turned loose in a fenced and wooded area. It felt wonderful to stretch his legs and run. There was another dog there, and a woman. He felt safe, and welcome, and home. He explored his new surroundings, ate, and then finally realized how exhausted he was. He settled down on the soft bed the woman had made for him and rested. He felt so happy to be there that he couldn't help but wag his tail whenever she looked at him. The woman decided his name should be Shanghai. It felt good to have a name.

The next day the woman took Shanghai to see the vet. He was indeed a very sick dog, with a high fever and a long list of ailments. His once beautiful, thick, soft coat was coarse, matted, and rippled from wind and rain. He weighed only forty-two pounds. In spite of all his problems, Shanghai managed to wag his tail at everyone he met that day. After spending a long week in the hospital on IV fluids, he was finally well enough to go home again.

As Shanghai gradually recuperated, gained weight, and grew stronger he began to remember. He remembered how much he liked to have his tummy rubbed, and how he loved to play with tennis balls and toys. He remembered his house manners and vowed to always try to be a good boy. He remembered how wonderful it was to have a family, and a place to call home.

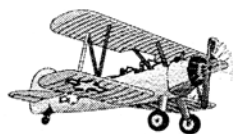
Shanghai has recovered fully from everything and has been neutered. He now weighs about eighty pounds and has shoulder muscles that would make a body builder proud. He's an enthusiastic, high-energy boy whose antics are always entertaining. Shanghai proudly carries on the traits passed down from his ancestors: intelligence, spirit, strength, and courage. **The End** (At least for now...)

Bonnie Kayser



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## PARTNERS IN CRIME

I was really worried how our youngest dog, Fraya, was going to like having a new baby in the house. So I did everything the baby books tell you to prepare the family pet for a new baby. We set up the nursery and let the dogs get used to all the new things and smells. We even had a doll that wore a diaper and baby clothes that we carried around the house. Well, it seemed to work. When Skyler arrived all 3 of my dogs did great. In fact Fraya and Skyler are best of friends now. I couldn't figure out why now—16 months later—they would start misbehaving. I started finding food wrappers on the floor that I knew were from the kitchen counter. But with the joy of having 3 dogs I never could figure out who was doing it. And what really puzzled me was that they were doing it while I was home, not while I was gone. I thought they must need some more one-on-one time from me. So every night I would take one dog at a time on a special “us”-time walk. It didn't help. We decided to set a trap to see which dog was jumping on the counter. We

left the bread wrapper open and hanging over the edge and snuck away. It wasn't too long before we found out who the bread snatcher was, and luckily we had the camera ready for the picture. It wasn't the dogs at all!! My daughter at the bright age of 16 months had found out she could use Fraya as a step stool to reach things. She would wait until Fraya stretched out in her favorite spot and then would stand on her, grab the bread, and feed it to all the dogs! So now whenever anybody asks me if German shepherds can be good with kids, I just show them my picture...it speaks for itself!



*Teresa Rogers*

## TIL DEATH DO YOU PART

**D**eath is even more certain than taxes. Every day dogs are surrendered to shelters because their owner died and the family was either unable or unwilling to care for the dog. Dogs also wind up in shelters when their owner is seriously injured or ill. Numerous dogs come to VGSR for that reason. I shudder to think of the dogs that never made it out of the shelter. And it is heartbreaking to wonder if maybe a family member, neighbor, or friend would have provided a loving home but was unaware of the dog's plight until it was too late. As unpleasant as the topic is, please, **NOW**, make arrangements for your pets if an unexpected misfortune should befall you.

Talk with your family and friends **NOW**. Don't wait. Anybody can be in a car accident. We all have heard of people who appear to be the epitome of health having a sudden heart attack, stroke, aneurysm, or other fatal or near-fatal catastrophe. By then, **IT IS TOO LATE!**

*First*, find a family member or friend you can trust to carry out your wishes. You need somebody who will be physically available, who will be able to make good decisions even if faced with your incapacity or death, and who can carry out those decisions. This is not always your best friend or even your spouse. For example, if your spouse will be busy caring for your young children, it may be better to have somebody else take charge of Fido. Also, plan for what will happen if you and your spouse should be in the same plane crash, hit by the same bolt of lightning, etc. This

*(continued on page 6)*

## DIARY OF A PROUD FORMER FOSTER MOM!

This story is dedicated to anyone who ever thought about fostering and what it can do for your pride. In addition, it is dedicated to people who have adopted a dog and feel like they cannot do much with that dog, or cannot show at competition levels.

Many might remember one of my early fosters named Sassy. Sassy would **NOT** go potty on a leash and I had my doubts that her adoptive mom Mary would be able to get past that as she lived in a home with no fence. Well I am happy to report that not only did Mary overcome that issue with Sassy (after only 24 hours) but she also brought her into the obedience ring where Sassy earned her CDX title as told in my last story. And now, **DRUM ROLL PLEASE**, I would like to share the following announcement about my shy little withdrawn non-leash potty former foster dog Sassy...

'I am so proud to announce that Sassy got her Utility Dog (UD) title at the Dog Owners Dog show in Howard County. We also received a little prize money for placing third, which paid for the gas up there, and a crystal platter for being the highest scoring German Shepherd Dog. The judge ran through 33 dogs in 4 hours! Sassy was dutifully rewarded with a good bone and snored through the night exhausted from the day. She can finally take a break while I change focus and work on the puppy.' Mary Denigan

*(continued on page 6)*

## NEW FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS TO BENEFIT VGSR!

VGSR has just begun several new and exciting programs to help us raise funds for our needy pooches. You may now send us (or bring by any VGSR event) your used ink cartridges, cell phones (and their old batteries and accessories), Purina Weight Circles symbols (from Purina brand dog foods), and Pedigree Proof-of-Purchase symbols (from Pedigree brand dog foods). Please spread the word to your friends, coworkers, and fellow animal lovers.

All labels, phones, and cartridges can be sent to:

VGSR  
c/o Barbara Dodge  
7388 Hillside Turn  
Mount Airy, MD 21771

or just stop in to one of our events. We would love to say Hi and Thank you!

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## Til Death-continued

may or may not be the person who ultimately keeps your dog. The important thing is that this person absolutely needs to be someone who will promptly know if something happens to you, so that Fido isn't taken to a shelter by a perhaps well-meaning but uninformed family member.

*Second*, find someone who is willing and able to adopt your dog and with whom you would want your dog to live. Consider whether the person has the time, space, and financial resources to care for a dog (or another dog, if he already has one). If he has or soon may have children, consider whether your dog is kid-friendly.

"Find someone" does NOT mean "speculate silently whether person X" will do it. It means TALK to that person NOW. Ask him flat-out if he would adopt your dog should something happen to you, and listen carefully to his response. If he seems to have any reservations, find someone else.

If the person who agrees is your co-worker, second cousin, or neighbor up the street, etc. who won't necessarily know right away of your death or health issue, then see Step # 1 above — MAKE SURE THERE IS SOMEONE WHO CAN TAKE IMMEDIATE CARE OF YOUR DOG, AND MAKE SURE HE KNOWS HOW TO CONTACT THE PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE PARENT. A clock starts ticking the day a dog is delivered to a shelter. Do not let your dog perish in a shelter because nobody knew who to call, or how. Your family needs to know, and needs to know RIGHT AWAY.

## Diary-continued

So folks, don't let anyone try to look down at your "rescue dog" because we all now know that any one of our "rescues" can do whatever we want of them. We only but need to ask! Thanks to Mary and Sassy for showing us what can be done if one tries and for making us all even more proud to let the world know that we own "rescue dogs."

*Sue Garrison*

## VGSR's WISH LIST:

- Crates (large or extra large)
- Postage stamps
- Copy paper (white or colors)
- Dog beds, blankets, towels
- Dog toys, nylabones, greenies, rawhide
- New collars and leashes
- Petsmart, Petco, Walmart or Target (among others) gift cards
- Dog food
- Dog bowls
- Dog shampoo
- Donated printing services

*Wills:* A word about wills: the most critical factor in planning for death is COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION, **before** death. Many times a will is not read until a week or longer after a death. Talk NOW.

That having been said, it is perfectly acceptable to name in your will who you want to have Fido. You should consider whether to leave any money to that person for Fido's care. As of July 1, 2006, in Virginia, you can set up a pet trust to ensure that the money goes to the benefit of your dog. (see <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+55-544.08>) The Maryland General Assembly is currently considering such a bill. (SB 235, see <http://mlis.state.md.us/2006rs/billfile/sb0235.htm>) (Incidentally, you can also leave money to your favorite animal charities, including VGSR!)

The moral is to make sure your health emergency does not sentence your dog to a premature, cold, lonely, shelter death. Please, please, please—return some of your dog's love and loyalty by ensuring that he will be cared for, forever. Make arrangements for him NOW.

*This article is not intended to give legal advice or to create any attorney-client relationship. Please consult an attorney to handle your estate planning needs.*

*Erica S. Stoecker, Esq.*

## THANK YOU!

We hope we have covered everyone who made a donation. If we omitted someone, please accept our humblest apologies!

And, thanks to everyone who made donations via PayPal. We are in the process of downloading the list, and will acknowledge these donations in the next newsletter.

### We gratefully acknowledge the following donations—

- Sue Huntt  
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 Santana, from Victoria and Robert Walker  
 Sasha, from Joan Davanzo  
 Schatzi and Pfeffer, from David Tikkala  
 Solo, from Dorothy and Ted Cilley  
 Sox, from Gullermo and Lois Carranza  
 Sponsor for Nikki and Shikka, from Carl  
 Kerby and Jeanne O'Donoghue  
 Storm, from Mary and Daniel Evans  
 Tucker, from Susan Lehman  
 White Fang, from Lt. Col. Wm A. Allanson  
 Yogi, from Nancy and John Streeter  
 Zack, from Mary Vipperman
- Donations in memory of:**  
 Baby, from Ann and Dean Kuntz  
 Baby, from Emmett and Sandra Harlan  
 Barbara Meranze's dog, Ziggy, from  
 Hilary Kiell  
 Bianca, from Sydney and Cynthia  
 Hutchinson  
 Dutch and Strain on behalf of Charles  
 Strain, from Capt. Mary Savitsky and  
 Paul Falkenstein  
 Flower, from Thomas Decker  
 Friend Mary's dog, Barron, from  
 Steven and Jodi Jones  
 Julie, from J.S. Furse  
 Bella, from Daniele Malki  
 Julie Kearney, from Mary Ruane  
 Marley, from Michael and Kerry Bennett  
 Zachary, from Carol T. Rosa  
 Peggy Matlock, from C.K. Mahler  
 Peggy Matlock, from James and  
 Jeannette Linza  
 Peggy Matlock, from M.B. Scholz  
 Peggy Matlock, from Donald and  
 Sandra Matlack  
 Rameses; Heidi and Phoenix, from  
 Frederick and Cindy Zugay  
 Sheya and Hallie, from Debra Braden  
 Mosby, from Michael Frey  
 Ruffian, Lance and Falko, from Fidel and  
 Susan Plantilla  
 Sarah, from Paul and Laura Simon  
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Enclosed is my tax-deductible\* donation in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to Virginia German Shepherd Rescue, Inc.

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

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\*Virginia German Shepherd Rescue, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. Please consult your tax advisor for details.

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**Virginia German Shepherd Rescue, Inc.  
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