

VGSR *Tails*

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Warm greetings from your friends here at VGSR. By the time this newsletter hits your mailbox we will have celebrated our sixth birthday. At times it seems like we just got started and then at other times it seems like we have been saving

dogs forever. When those of you that take the time and trouble to drop us a note or email, with photos of your adopted dog(s), please know that it truly makes our day. Those notes can boost our spirits when we sometimes need it the most. And to those of you who have come back and adopted a second (or in a few cases, a third!) dog, we consider that to be the highest compliment you can give us. We also very much appreciate the referrals that you give out to your friends, co-workers and neighbors.

And here is the news that I know you all have been anxiously waiting to hear (insert drum roll here please!) Both Taz (our orthopedic nightmare wonder dog) and Mickey D (world's nicest dog with the world's worst legs) have been adopted! Taz now lives with an angel named Marty and his cats in Arlington and Mickey D joined Dave and Dawn and all of their pack out in Manassas. I think the folks who are generous enough to adopt dogs with special needs are some of the most compassionate people to walk the face of the earth. Special recognition should also be given to the folks that adopt our senior dogs. Sometimes these older dogs have lived their entire lives outside in a dog run, chained to a doghouse, or tied to a tree. Can you imagine the joy they must experience when their lives change and suddenly they live INSIDE the house, and have a soft bed of their

own (or their owners!), plenty of food, clean water and most importantly of all, the love and affection that they did not know existed until they got rescued by VGSR. Even if they only get to know this sort of comfort for a short while, they will know they are loved.



Maco is one of those dogs that lived his entire life on the end of a chain. He was turned in to animal control by his owners because (get this) he did NOT bark enough. I have to tell you that he is absolutely, without question, one of the sweetest, most affectionate creatures that I have ever met. When he first came into rescue he was afraid of the stairs, the ringing phone, any appliance that made noise—all of these things would cause him to cry or drop to the floor. He also covered away from people, until he realized that he was safe and started to come out of his shell and get happy. The change in his personality has been truly miraculous, much thanks to the patience and affection he received from his foster parents, Marisa and Jeff. Now when folks approach Maco, he holds his head high and wags his tail vigorously instead of crouching down and waiting for something bad to happen.

Maco also tested positive for heartworm infestation. So thanks to all of you kind folks who always so gener-

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

From the President-continued

ously make donations to VGSR, we could afford to have the heartworm treatment done that saved his life. If you were close enough to him, he would give all of you big, sloppy kisses as his way of saying THANKS, canine style.

Thanks to your continued support and generous donations, VGSR has now placed more than 1,300 dogs in their new homes. Wow! That is a whole bunch o' dogs! So even though we have said it before, we won't ever be able to say it enough—to express how truly grateful we are for your help. THANK-YOU one and all!

Lea

Desperately seeking...

Susan, or John, or George, or Debbie to foster our dogs for us. Pay is minimal but you get back 10-fold of what you put into it. Call 703 435-2840.

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

And if you or someone you know can donate printing services for the rescue, please let us know!

**Check the website
 for upcoming events**

I BELIEVE IN COMPASSION

I believe in compassion and the power of one person to make a difference. I believe that each of us, in some small way, has the power to improve the lives of other living beings and by doing so, improve our own lives.

It was the day before Thanksgiving, 1994. I was expecting 14 people for dinner the next day and our house was in an uproar when the phone rang. It was the DC animal shelter. They were overfull for the holiday, short of staff, and they needed to move some dogs out. They had two German Shepherd males who needed a place to go. My husband jumped in his truck, my best friend fired up her van, and off they went to the shelter on New York Avenue.

Miles came home with my husband that night. He walked into the house, wagged his tail politely, and lay down in front of the kitchen stove. He stayed there, more or less, for the next 9 years. During Thanksgiving dinner he found a child to cuddle him, and he was happy. He wasn't the most intelligent dog we've ever had, but he was certainly the most loving. He was at his best with small children, autistic teenagers, and developmentally disabled adults; anyone who needed a lick and a snuggle was his kind of person.

Eighteen years of dog rescue have taught me a few things: Not everyone loves animals. Rescue is dirty work (dog poop is the most adhesive substance found in nature). I can't save

them all. Human stupidity and ignorance are the strongest and most pervasive forces in the universe. Compassion is a wedge, not a hammer.

I could do something easier. Nobody is paying me to drive all night to get this batch of homeless hounds from point A to point B. Sure, I'd rather be home in bed instead of walking dogs at 4:30 in the morning at a rest stop on the New Jersey turnpike. But when the trip is over and the critters are delivered, and we're sitting in some diner drinking coffee, punchy from lack of sleep, do I believe that the world just became a slightly better place? You bet I do.

I believe that all the grubby volunteers driving around in their beat-up vehicles with rescued dogs and cats are doing something good. I believe that the hours spent on the phone are not wasted. I believe that by opening my heart and my home to abandoned dogs, I am helping to buy them a second chance. And by buying them a second chance, I improve my chances too. I believe that the voiceless deserve a voice, and that because we have created the world that they live in, I have a responsibility to help. If I help them, then I help myself. The Rabbis call it "tikkun olam; to mend, heal, and transform the world." We are all in this together, trying to save the world, one dog at a time.

Risa Lapidow

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF TIMOTHY BAUMKER

I am not sure exactly how we heard of VGSR, but we had lost our first German shepherd, Copper, at 6 years old and were looking for another baby to love. We had Crystal at home and wanted her to have a friend to play with. My husband, Tim, received a VGSR business card and we contacted Lea to see if we could get a puppy. Lea came out to our home and met Crystal and to see if we qualified. The loss of our Copper was very devastating for Tim; he loved that dog like he was our own flesh and blood, like one does a child. We gave our neighbors as references, and one of our neighbors told Lea that if he were a dog, he would want to live with us.

Tim and I had played with Copper every single night after work, mostly Tim in the winter. Copper looked forward to it every night and would not calm down until he saw his daddy getting ready to play. No matter the weather—snow, rain or heat—they would be out there every night. Then we brought home Crystal. Copper was a little jealous, so we played with them separately until they could get used to one another. There were now two play sessions a night, one out front and one in the back.

Because of our references, we were approved to get one of Precious's puppies, Oscar (his name at the time). Tim was a Fairfax County Police Officer and former Marine, so what do you name your second male puppy? Chesty Puller. Chesty was a blessing to us, very spastic, yet a very lovable dog. He took to Crystal right away, but she had to let him know who was in charge.

Five years into our marriage, Tim developed a disease called adrenomyeloneuropathy (AMN), originally diagnosed as MS—a very rare, degenerative disease that would eventually take his life. Because of this disease, we were unable to have children, so our dogs were our world. At Christmas, we told family and friends to donate what they were to buy us for Christmas, because we would be doing the same. What better way to pay back the very people that gave us our Chesty, but to donate to VGSR? We made this an annual contribution and hoped that it was enough to help a few dogs and help them find their forever homes, like Chesty did.

Tim gave up his battle on November 18, 2006. His final wish was that instead of flowers donations be made to VGSR. I still have my two babies, Crystal and Chesty, and they have gotten me through the roughest time in my life. I want to thank VGSR for allowing me to give Chesty a loving home and for giving me one of the two best things in my life right now. I currently live in NC, but will always treasure Virginia German Shepherd Rescue for my Chesty. I also want to personally thank Lea for being at Tim's Memorial Service. I know that it would have meant a lot to Tim to have you there.

Tim and Copper and our cat, Krazy, are together again, their ashes spread in the lake behind our home in NC, their spirits in Heaven.

Pam Baumker

THINKING OF FOSTERING?

Fostering a dog is a rewarding experience, but I'll be the first to say that it is not for everyone. Some people try fostering and fail. We call those people "adopters." My own experience with fostering started about 6 years ago. We were new to Charlottesville and walked innocently into a local pet store to buy food for the three dogs we already had. There was a rescue group out front (Animal Connections) and we ended up with a fourth dog in the pack, a 4–6 month old St. Bernard mix now named Cabell.

We had the requisite home visit from the group's director and the pup's foster mom. In the process, we got to know the group and discussed the possibility of fostering for them. I got a call about a week later about a pregnant female Rottweiler in the Louisa County shelter. The pups would have been euthanized at birth, and she was very near delivery, so we had to get her out fast. My partner went to the shelter to get her while I was getting things set up at home. We got her on St. Patrick's Day and called her Maggie.

A week later, she delivered 10 puppies. She was a first time mother, didn't know what to do (I knew even less), and she was more interested in going out to play with me

than in caring for the pups. We managed to raise most of the litter and went on to adopt them all out except one, who became our Bremo. I adored Maggie and would have kept her forever, except that my female GSD, Gypsy (adopted from Lea and Risa), said "NO" in a very emphatic manner. So I started taking Maggie to adoption outings with Animal Connections and eventually adopted her to a physical therapist who was treating me at the time and her boyfriend. They were perfect for Maggie—they had no prejudice against Rotties and they were both young, active, runners who could give Maggie the kind of exercise and attention that she craved.

While it was hard to let Maggie go, it was made easier by the fact that I knew she was going to an even better home than I could provide. Having a say in the adoption process felt good. If I didn't like the home, she wouldn't have gone, and we would have waited for a better one. For Maggie, we couldn't have found a better home. Every year at Christmas, the card I most look forward to is the one

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MAYA AND COCOA

I first started volunteering for this rescue in July 2006. Since that time, I have talked with and met a lot of people. I have heard and seen things, both good and bad.

I've gone to the shelters with a watchful eye, yet a heavy heart. I've watched people give up their dogs just because they are an inconvenience or they don't fit into their lives anymore. And, I've seen dogs in such bad shape that one would think it would take a miracle to bring them back to health. But, with the love, hard work, and devotion of our fosters, and just maybe a little help from above, somehow, they do. This is the story of two of those dogs and the heroes that saved them.

The first dog is named Maya, a beautiful, sweet, loving dog. Her owner decided at some point in his pitiful life that it's okay to put two adult dogs, and their puppies into a very cramped box, and let them basically fend for themselves. Food and water were scarce and when found, Maya was skin and bones and in very bad shape.

The second dog is named Cocoa, a really sweet, loving, but sad dog. His owner had decided that the only needs of a dog were food and water. No heartworm prevention, no flea prevention, no shots, and not much love or attention were ever given to this dog. When Cocoa was taken from this owner, he must have had a thousand fleas on him, and was very weak.

Two dogs from two separate worlds that would soon come together to be the best of friends and have the home they so rightfully deserved.

It was a cold day in January that I did my very first home visit. Another volunteer and I met with the potential adoptive family. We visited, walked in the yard and talked about dog matters. Even though this was my first homecheck—and I have to admit I was a little worried I might forget to ask a certain question or miss a certain something—I just had a gut feeling this family would absolutely make a great home for any dog it might adopt. So, we left the house and I wrote my summary and sent it in. As soon as they were approved, the search was on. Now, they had told me that they wanted to take their time in choosing a dog. They needed to make a good decision since they would eventually like to add another dog to their home. Plus, they needed to consider aging parents who live with them.

Since we don't have that many fosters in the Hampton Roads area, that means we don't have that many available

dogs either. But, there was Maya and yes, there was also Cocoa. Either one of these two dogs would have been a great match for this family. So, we all agreed we would arrange for them to meet both dogs at the next adoption day. That way they would have more than one dog to choose from. None of us could have known what this meeting would mean for the family and these two dogs.

Well, the day came, the family was there, Maya and Cocoa were there and, as the saying goes, "the rest is history." Since they basically fell in love with both dogs and could not choose between them, they decided right then and there to adopt them both. Needless to say, we could not have been happier for both of these dogs and for this wonderful family.

After they agreed to adopt both dogs, we received some very sad news regarding Cocoa's long-term health. It seems he has a disease that will grievously compromise the health of his kidneys. In other words, they will eventually fail. I immediately notified them about the diagnosis, but they did not waver in their determination to adopt him. And, in February both dogs went to their new home.

Since Maya and Cocoa have been in the home, we have received many photos and notes. Their progress is amazing and you can almost see the smiles on their little faces. As

far as the family, well let's just say their faces light up too.

So, in ending this story I need to talk about the fosters, not only those who saved these two dogs, but about all the fosters who every day give their time, their love, their tears and their devotion to the dogs we all love so much. And kudos to the adopters who could so easily go to a breeder and buy a brand new puppy that has no life baggage, no bad history with humans, and no bad habits to break, but instead choose to open their homes and their hearts to a rescue dog.

And though most all of us do not see ourselves as heroes but as simple human beings, in the eyes of our rescue dogs, we are heroes to them. And, after all, they are the only eyes that count.

This article is dedicated to Diane Diaz (Maya's foster mom), Patty Allen (Cocoa's foster mom), Maya's and Cocoa's new forever family, and, of course, Maya and Cocoa!

Debbie Pratt



VGSR would like to thank the Herndon Moose Lodge for generously hosting our annual Basket Bingo. In addition, we would like to thank Ron Heron, bingo caller extraordinaire, for his continued support of VGSR all year long. Please support the Herndon Moose Lodge regular bingo that is held every Friday night.

THE FOOD BOWL

Mix pureed chicken livers, whole wheat flour, minced garlic cloves, oil and one egg with shell and bake for 50 minutes. While this may not bring your human family members to the dinner table, rest assured that your canine family will love the liver brownies and probably ask for seconds. The rest of this recipe and much more are part of *The Food Bowl*, a collection of recipes available only through the Virginia German Shepherd Rescue.

Yes, from the creative gourmet kitchens of the VGSR volunteers and the wonderful folks who have adopted our dogs, the best recipes for human and animal dishes are available. For those of you who have adopted or keep up with our wonderful dogs, you can try to identify the GSDs that are pictured on the cover and throughout the book.

They are all part of the VGSR family—you may be surprised to find your GSD featured.

As our latest fundraising endeavor, this cookbook of tried and true recipes for people and pets is available at adoption days and at other VGSR events. If you can't make it to one of these events and would like one or more cookbooks, please contact the VGSR hotline or a VGSR volunteer. This cookbook will make a great addition to your kitchen, as well as an awesome gift for your animal loving friends. And think of the joy this will bring to that very special family member. Donation minimum: \$15 for one cookbook, \$25 for two cookbooks.

Hilary Kiell

ONE PLUS ONE

One and one and one more equals two—okay, it equals three—but who is counting? This is Lesson 103 in how to say “no” to fostering!

After much back and forth, and finally adopting King (I really would have been stupid not to—he is such a great dog), and almost 2 years later (not regretting a single day), I thought my house was full with two big German sheppers that have their mom trained!

Little did I know one sunny July morning—here I was minding my own business, just trying to drive to work—when my cell phone rings. It was my friend Tommie, fellow VGSR volunteer, who started out simply enough with “want to foster a long-haired German shepherd?” That was the million dollar question of the day. When I checked my e-mail, there was the question again... “want to foster a long hair?” After seeing that crappy shelter picture of a scared long haired fuzzy butt, how could I refuse?

Who would have thought that saying “yes” to that little long-haired shepherd would get me the third one that I was not (really) looking for? Later that week, he showed up at my front door with Tommie and Bonnie in tow...Tommie, since she had to take him for a few hours, and Bonnie, to help with the introductions to the other two.

The introductions did not go too badly. The long hair named “Gretel” (the shelter thought he was a female and about 3) was extremely shy and tried to get away from the other two. Who could blame him? After coming back in the house he found a corner, and of course I had to see him up close and personal! Poor thing...he was in really bad shape. Under that matted, stinky coat, he was nothing but a skeleton. I was shocked; it was a miracle he survived the neuter (the records indicated a weight of 48 pounds but he should have been somewhere in the 60 to 70 pound range). Thankfully, he was heartworm negative, but full of worms

and other stuff; that possibly explained the weight! But this poor dog was not only in bad shape physically, but mentally as well. He would just cower. I will never understand how people can be so cruel to animals. The professional groomer that cleaned him up felt a broken rib. We can only venture to guess what happened to this dog.

Progress was slow; it seemed for every step forward he took two back. At times I felt so helpless, I just did not know what else to do for him besides be patient and love him. Then along came Shirley—a wonderful trainer—that I am truly in awe off! She spent about half an hour talking with me while he was in the room. She then asked me to take him outside (since that was one of his big issues—he did not want to go outside). After watching me for a few minutes, she took over. Not even five minutes later, I saw a totally different dog. All of a sudden, he walked differently and I saw confidence, like a million pounds just dropped off his shoulders!

Needless to say, I ended up adopting him and, of course, renaming him. His name is now Bentley. He weighs in at about 67 pounds and is just one stunning dog! Little did I know that his true personality is also stunning—he is a stinker! It still amazes me when he now walks up to me and tries to paw me, or even mouth me. I can hug him and smother him with kisses...he now enjoys it. He also is one big “momma’s boy!” Every once in a while I still get that look... but he knows that he found a sucker and two great four-legged brothers that adore him (for the most part).

We still have a long way to go, but he is so worth it! I would not trade him for anything. I love having my three boys—each with his own past and personality—making them so special! And it shows that each dog reacts differ-

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THANK YOU!

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations—

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 Rameses, Neidi and Phoenix from Frederick and Cindy Zugay
 Tammy, Sasha from James Cutts
 Penny and Clancy from James and Jill Welsh
 Katy, to Lea and Dillon from Gail A. Monteforte
 Garfield from Marla E. Dugger
 Lukas (Mark and Brad's dog) from Mona Ellison
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 Sadie Johnston from Valerie L. Rovine
 Tim Baumker from John W. Bugg and Deborah W. Wilkes
 Tim Baumker from The Shanteau Family
 Tim Baumker, Copper and Krazy from Pamela J. Baumker

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 Harold Wolf

ONE SMART COOKIE

We adopted Franzi when she was 3 years old. She was the perfect dog for us first-time GSD owners. Her intelligence never ceased to amaze us.

My husband, Jimmie, is a born and bred Southerner...you know, the country type that like to feed dogs table scraps? However, we learned the hard way that Franzi was not a Southern dog. She had a very sensitive stomach. But it seemed Jimmie was never around to see the after-effects of his “treats” to her from the night prior. I would ask him not to feed her scraps, but he’d forget, or think he could sneak her “just one” without it being a problem.

One Saturday, we had a show to work down at the Washington Convention Center. As we were preparing to leave for the day, I noticed Franzi was asking to go out a few extra times that morning, which was not the norm. I started to have concerns, but the hustle and bustle of getting ready for the show overrode my motherly instincts. I kissed Franzi and Zack (our Yorkie) goodbye and headed down town.

That evening we arrived home exhausted, ready to sit down, relax, and prop up our sore feet. As we opened the door to the house we were greeted with a really bad smell! Franzi came slinking towards us and we knew she’d had an accident. We never punished her because it was always our fault. So we quickly let her outside to see that the poor girl was still clearing her system. I glared at Jimmie. “What did you feed her?!”

“Nothing.” He lied.

I intensified my glare. I knew better. “Jimmieeeeeee?”

Finally he conceded, “Just a couple of little shrimp last night...”

“Grrrrrr!” I growled at him along with other choice words.

So began our search to find the source of the odor. We searched the first floor and were perplexed to find nothing.

Up the stairs we went to search the next level, to find, again, nothing. But the smell was stronger. Then Jimmie hollered from a back room, “Found it! I’ll clean it up!” I went over to see. It was only a small, palm-size pile on the floor. I said, “I can’t believe that little pile is stinking up the whole house...”

As Jimmie tended to the clean up, I started into the bathroom, flipped the light on and the smell was overwhelming! But I could see no signs of what was causing it! I took a deep breath and pulled my shirt up over my nose and mouth, and walked in.

The curtain on the tub was almost closed so I slowly pulled it back and to my surprise, horror and delight, Franzi had apparently been using the bathtub as her toilet all day! Our white bathtub looked like a scene from Psycho, only it wasn’t blood. (You get the picture). I called Jimmie in to see this and we both stood there speechless. We were flabbergasted her thought process.

Needless to say, Jimmie got clean up ‘doody’. And it was pretty easy clean up thanks to Franzi’s exceptional thinking. Jimmie learned his lesson about table scraps and we found a plain rawhide cookie that satisfied them both without consequences.

Jacki Jones

Thinking of Fostering?-continued

from her new family. She has moved to upstate New York, but I receive a picture and an update every year. Maggie is still their only child, but she has human grandparents in the area who borrow her occasionally for the weekend when they are feeling the need for a few friendly licks.

After giving up Maggie, I realized that I could foster without adopting every dog that came my way. A few of them still get to me the way she did (Rocky, Harlan, Molly...) but mostly I am happy to send them on their way to a home of their own. The need is such that their spot is never empty for long, but they always have a spot in my heart. Our foster count since then is probably a couple hundred or more, but it is the difference we make in the life of one dog at a time that makes this all worthwhile.

Brent Jacques

One Plus One-continued

ently toward what happened in his past. Gin Roomy came to me with that “big bad dog attitude” at the age of 3 months, and he turned out to be one of the sweetest dogs that you will ever meet (stubborn as you know what—but a big sweetie)!

I will always go for the underdogs. They might be a challenge, but the outcome will always be the same. You end up with the most perfect dog that ever walked (all over you) into your life! Not every dog is easy; each one has its challenges, but the bottom line is don’t give up! The end result will be so worth it. And fostering is the best thing you can do, along with finding the perfect home for them, of course (including yours, perhaps?).

So thank you VGSR and any other rescue that work so hard to save these animals that others think are worth so little, but in reality are worth so much! All the sweat and tears that go into saving such precious lives...we know how much they are truly worth!

Nicole Regele

Note from the editor: Thanks for all the wonderful submissions for this edition of the newsletter. We regret we didn’t have room for everything in this issue. Look for them in an upcoming edition!



Yes! I Want To Help!

Enclosed is my tax-deductible* donation in the amount of \$ _____ payable to Virginia German Shepherd Rescue, Inc.

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Virginia German Shepherd Rescue, Inc.
P.O. Box 126
Sterling, VA 20167

Save the Date!

Annual VGSR Reunion

Saturday,

October 14th

(raindate, see website)