



**SPCA/Humane Society  
of Prince George's County, Inc. (SPCA/HS)**

**P.O. Box 925  
Bowie, MD 20718**

**301-262-5625  
www.pgspca.org**

# HEADS & TAILS

**Spring/Summer 2007**

## **Crazy for Josie...Snuggle Muffin & Wild Child**

**B**ack in June 2002, we had to put down our female Jack Russell terrier (JRT) mix, Moxie, due to chronic health problems related to Cushing's disease. I was devastated. Almost immediately, though, I started perusing Petfinder.com "just to look," I told my husband.

That's how I discovered Josie, a little female JRT listed with the SPCA/Humane Society of Prince George's County (pgspca.org). Her picture alone spoke volumes; she seemed to be smiling and looked so happy and alert. Oddly, her story was a bit sad. I learned that she had been picked up as a stray and was heartworm positive. After being treated (and almost dying), she had been adopted out only to be returned within a few months.

I inquired about her availability and arranged to meet her at an adoption event, where I spent about an hour sitting on the floor with her in my lap. She was just so sweet and engaging and couldn't seem to get enough of my attention. I filled out the adoption application and left wondering how many others had also been captivated by her and what the outcome would be.

A couple of weeks later I learned that my husband and I had been chosen to adopt Josie, and thus began our little love affair. The first night we had her, we put her in bed with us and discovered that she was a total "snuggle

muffin." She also proved to be quite energetic and mischievous. One night, she began tearing around the house all excited. I was sitting in my chair in the living room reading the paper. Just as I held it up in front of me, she came ripping around the corner and jumped right through it like a trained circus animal. Wow... what a fun, silly little dog!

But...there were issues. To begin with, we had the yard fenced but Josie proved to be quite an escape artist. Thankfully, she managed to not get hit by a car. My husband

ended up practically redoing the whole fence we had just paid to have erected. Now it's like Alcatraz out there.

Then there was the chewing. The first thing to go was a pair of good shoes; next, the leg of an old chair. After that, it was the corner of a new dresser and the leg of an antique china

*Continued on back page*



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**It's About  
the Animals**



United Way  
of the National Capital Area

United Way #8977

CFCNCA #7439

The SPCA/HS of Prince George's County is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to animal welfare. All activities are funded solely through contributions, dues, and special events. To learn more, visit our website at [www.pgspca.org](http://www.pgspca.org) or call 301-262-5625.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE It's About Limits

In 1994, my husband and I searched local animal shelters for our perfect companion. With our small townhouse and yard, we felt we couldn't take a dog over 40 pounds and were very clear about that limit on every application and in every interview. Repeatedly, we noted our space limitations and steered ourselves away from the bigger dogs. Soon we found Shazam, a 40-pound black "Labrador mix" with pointed ears and an iron will. She charmed her way into our hearts and our home, and we marveled repeatedly at how lucky it was that we could save her life.

We often thought of all the other homeless but wonderful dogs out there, and Shazam was lonely as an only dog, so it's not hard to guess what happened next: A year later, we rescued Max, a gorgeous brindle "boxer mix" pup who miraculously grew into a greyhound. We absolutely adored our rescue dogs, so when we heard that more than twenty dogs a day were being put down at the county shelter, we began fostering for the SPCA/HS. After hosting a steady stream of great foster dogs over the next two years, we adopted our third: an 80-pound flat-coated retriever mix named Winston, a perfect gentleman of a dog who fit in with our pack from the second he arrived in our home. And that's our story; we went into this dog thing absolutely sure that we had enough room only for one 40-pound dog. And now we have *three* dogs, totaling 175 pounds.

We continued to foster after that, but we quickly learned that four dogs was pretty much our limit. We could do five in a pinch (say, over a weekend), but managing more than four on a regular basis made it too hard to meet the needs of each individual animal and it made our lives rather crazy as well. So we limited ourselves, but it wasn't easy. Then we had two babies, so taking on more dogs became impossible. Instead, we looked for other ways to help. We have since moved into a larger house with a larger yard, and at some point when our children are older, we will definitely foster again. But right now, we just have to be honest about what we can handle.

All of us in animal welfare feel the horror of this country's staggering pet overpopulation statistics. Animals are dying in shelters at an alarming rate—approximately 10,000 annually in Prince George's County alone. We are often tempted to take in "just one more." But it's a sad fact of animal rescue work that "just one more" can quickly turn into "too many." Unfortunately, well-meaning rescuers often become overloaded with animals, and some even become collectors or hoarders. It's easy to become overwhelmed. And when the alternative is leaving an animal to die, it can be hard to be objective about how many is too many.

So we have to help each other in keeping the numbers **reasonable and responsible**. We need to **educate ourselves** about the dangers and signs of an overwhelmed rescue situation. To protect our rescue colleagues from being overloaded, we need to **speak up** whenever we see a potential problem. We need to **practice transparency** in our rescue activities, ensuring that foster homes (and kennels and catteries) are regularly inspected and that we have accurate records on the animals being kept. And because it's often hard to limit oneself, animal rescue organizations need to **set limits** as to the number of animals any one volunteer or facility can take on. It may seem arbitrary to just pick a number, but if we don't at least try to define what's reasonable and safe, we may end up with a bad situation that could have been prevented. How can we expect to fix the animal overpopulation problems in our communities and in our nation, if we can't even control the animal populations within our own ranks?

Tamela Terry, president

## Meet Your New Furry Friend at an Adoption Show!

**Second Saturday of the Month:** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., White Flint PETsMART, 301-770-1343

**Third Saturday of the Month:** 12 to 3 pm, Columbia Petco, 410-290-1313

**Fourth Saturday of the Month:** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Bowie PETsMART, 301-352-7286

\* Schedule subject to change! Check our website—[pgspca.org](http://pgspca.org)—for the latest information.

## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Pet Insurance May Offer Peace of Mind

**A**s Congress considers, yet again, plans to provide better health care coverage for more Americans, pet owners face a less publicized, but no less difficult, challenge: how to cover health care costs for their furry family members.

According to the American Pet Product Manufacturers Association, Americans spend an average of \$211 a year on routine veterinary visits for dogs and \$179 for cats, which isn't much when you consider the cost of a daily double latte at your local coffee bar. But those figures cover only the basics...not the unexpected or emergency care one in three pets will require in any one year, according to the Humane Society of the United States.

Take cancer, for example. According to the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM), some six million new cancers are diagnosed in both dogs and cats every year. The cost of treatment, which may include surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, can be daunting.

The answer for some may be pet insurance. Although not yet a universal concept, pet insurance has been available in the United States for 25 years. In fact, the nation's oldest pet health insurer, Veterinary Pet Insurance (VPI), sold its first policy to television's Lassie in 1982. One of the major factors driving interest in pet insurance today is the advances in veterinary medicine. From MRIs to CT scans, you can get just about any tests and treatments for cats and dogs that you can get for a human. But "with that advanced medicine comes a heftier price tag," says VPI spokesman Brian Iannessa.

A growing number of companies have joined VPI (<http://eb.petinsurance.com>) in providing coverage for pets. Among the largest are Petshealth ([www.petshealthplan.com](http://www.petshealthplan.com)), ASPCA Health ([www.aspcapetinsurance.com](http://www.aspcapetinsurance.com)), Pets Best ([www.petsbest.com](http://www.petsbest.com)), Shelter Care ([www.sheltercare.com](http://www.sheltercare.com)), and PetCare ([www.petcareinsurance.com](http://www.petcareinsurance.com)).

Policies are similar to human insurance policies, with variations in coverage, deductions, exclusions, and annual premiums. Some plans cover every routine visit and every vaccination—with premiums of about \$25 to \$30 a month—but you don't

necessarily need insurance for costs you know you'll incur, says Jennifer Fearing, director of economic research at the Humane Society of the United States. Policies that focus on catastrophic events usually have high deductibles and lower monthly premiums of about \$10 to \$15 and may make sense for more people.

So, it's important to do your homework and select the policy that best meets your needs and budget. You can check the policies offered by the companies above by going to their websites. And you can get some quick comparisons online at <http://personalinsure.about.com>. Click on "Pet Insurance" at the bottom of the left menu. On the resulting screen, click on the second link—"Choosing the Right Pet Insurance"—and see page two of the article.

While there's no doubt that pet insurance is a useful risk management tool, it may not be for everyone. The annual cost can be around \$250 a year—or about \$3,000 or more over the life of an average pet. Depending on the animal, some owners may never spend that much on treatments. But for owners who wouldn't hesitate to whip out the credit card—and even go into debt—to give their dog or cat dialysis, dental work, or spinal surgery, a pet insurance policy may be a wise investment.

*by Pam Townsend*



*Former foster Cooper naps while recovering from the first of two surgeries to repair hip dysplasia and luxating patella in both hind legs.*

## Donations Go High-Tech!

You can now donate online via a secure form on our website. Just go to [pgspca.org](http://pgspca.org) and click on "donate now." If you'd like an acknowledgment sent for an "in honor of" or "in memory of" donation, please email us with the person's name and address.

**It's About the Animals**



## 2006 Holiday Album

**T**he 2006 holiday season was a special time for our former foster animals...filled with love, gifts, and lots of time just “chilling.” Check out these photos from their new families.

Bogey takes to the beach with mom.



Sadie plays couch potato.



Sally (aka Peggy Sue) poses with two family members.

Leila shares her wish list with Santa (aka volunteer Gwyn Kesler).



Elvis and dad take a nap.



Jade gazes skyward, waiting for some snow to fall.

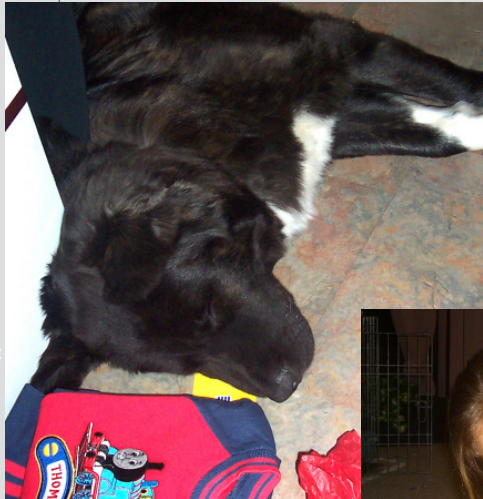


Darla checks out the girls' gifts.

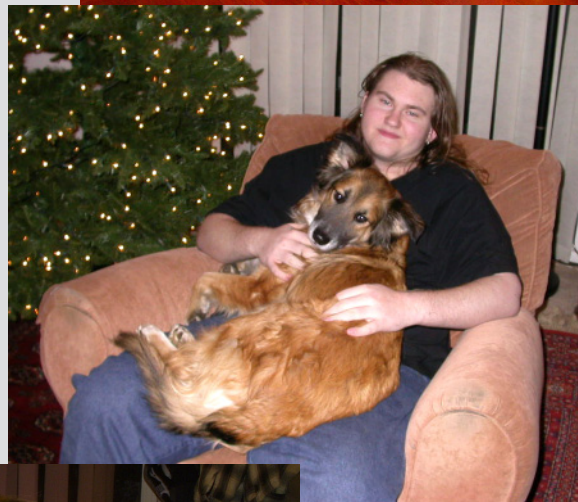
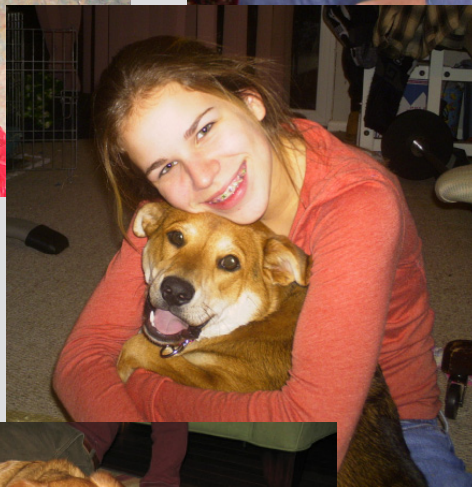


Cody enjoys a new toy.

Ralphie catches some ZZZZs.



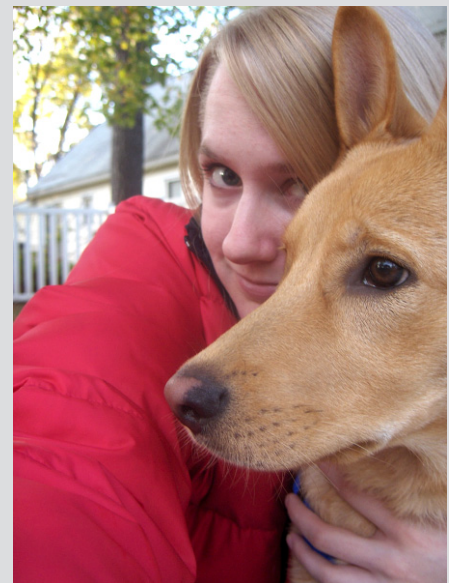
Susie gets a cuddle.



Charlie "hangs" with his big brother.



Cooper (aka Boomer) enjoys his haul.



Cali (aka Amber) gets a hug from her human sister.

## Help! My Dog is a Canine Jumping Bean

**H**ow can I get my dog to stop jumping on everyone?" That may be the all-time most frequently asked question for dog trainers! The answer is... "What would you like your dog to do instead?" Most people would like their dogs to sit politely, or at least remain with all four paws on the floor, rather than clawing Aunt Jane's new dress to shreds or licking off your neighbor's mascara.

Fine, you might say; I'd love my dog to sit politely, but at the moment, the mere sight of a person walking towards the front door sends Fido into spiraling leaps of joy. Take heart; the first ingredient for solving this problem is something you already own: a leash, an ordinary, six-foot leash that your dog probably wears at least once a day anyway.

The second ingredient is some motivation for your dog to sit. For most dogs, that means some extra-special food tidbits like tiny bits of hot dog, cheese, chicken... anything unusual and yummy!

The last ingredient is a stream of people willing to walk in and out of your house and feed your dog treats for sitting. Even family members can help, although your dog may not be quite as excited to see them.

OK, you're set: leash, treats, person. Supply your "guest" with some treats outside the house. Have your dog dragging her leash and pretend nothing unusual is happening. Have your guest knock or ring the doorbell. Pick up your dog's leash and then stand in the entryway, about six feet back from the door. Step firmly on the leash about 18 to 24 inches from the dog's collar—about where it naturally hits the floor as it hangs from the collar. You can get your dog "started" (if he already knows to sit for treats) by asking for a few sits and feeding him the tidbits every time he sits. He will likely continue to get up; ask him to sit a few more times to let him know that sitting in this context pays off.

Call out to your guest to come in. Your dog will attempt to jump—but you have that covered by stepping on the leash. Now, just WAIT! If your dog is focused and staring at the guest, trying to figure her out, she can ask for a sit—**once**. If the dog is jumping wildly, the guest should say nothing at all. After a few minutes, most dogs will sit out of sheer fatigue. Bingo! Your guest should say "yes!" and quickly feed your dog several tidbits. The guest can then go outside and repeat the process. End the training session when the dog is sitting fairly quickly, or start with a new "guest" and repeat the process. If your dog barks at your guest, he or she should immediately walk out the door and try again in 30 seconds (during the lull, you can remind your dog about sitting).

With each training session, you will see a gradual improvement; your dog will sit immediately, while still on leash, and get treats. The next step is to try this drill without stepping on the leash. So far so good? Then try it without a leash. If your dog reverts to his old ways, go back a step.

While you are in this training phase, you will want to be absolutely sure that in "real life" your dog does not get to practice his old habit of jumping. Use baby gates to keep your dog away from guests unless you are in training mode.

The final step is fading out the treats. Most dogs will learn that if they keep sitting, it will pay off eventually—just not most of the time. Keep your dog a good, strong sitter by being sure someone gives a treat when they come in at least once every dozen or so times on average. You can make this easier by keeping jerky treats or something equally tasty (but not perishable) in a container on your porch.

Of course, all this is easier if you have a coach. Contact your local positive reinforcement dog trainer by visiting the Association of Pet Dog Trainers website at [www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com).

by Liz Marsden

### Online Canine Recovery Tales

Two SPCA/HS foster pups are on the road to recovery following surgery. You can keep up to date on their progress, send messages of support, and even contribute to their care on their very own blogs.

Just go to  
[cannonsrecovery.blogspot.com](http://cannonsrecovery.blogspot.com)  
 and  
[tazstrials.blogspot.com](http://tazstrials.blogspot.com)



*Special thanks to  
 Antharia LLC for website design  
 services; Tresses & Shears, The Queen's  
 Ink, and Westfield for their holiday fundraising;  
 Franklin's Restaurant and General Store for  
 hosting fundraising events; PETsMART, Petco, and  
 the Big Bad Woof for giving us a venue to  
 showcase our adoptables; and College Park  
 Animal Hospital for taking care of  
 our foster animals.*

### **In Memory of a Person...**

**In memory of Judi Richardson:** Gladys Shaw  
**In memory of Leslie Landis Prager:** Steven Landis  
**In memory of Elsie Gasch:** Shirley Gergel, Somerset Park Condo  
**In memory of Beatrice Zamaitis:** Ruth Davis, Albert Briggs,  
 Ya-Jiun Tsai  
**In memory of Thelma Gertz:** Albert Gertz, Susan and Kevin  
 Brubaker, Michale and Nancy Sage  
**In memory of Frances "Fran" Carson:** Travis and Nancy Knight,  
 A.A. and J.D. Stover, Stephanie and Eric Reynolds, David Williams  
**In memory of Judi Richardson:** P.B. Bulger, John and Jean Browne,  
 Sandra and Joe Duffy, Linda and Robert Sisson, Frank and Kathleen  
 Agins, Raymond and Bertha Thompson, William and Virginia  
 Sunderland, William Sullivan, Pauline Barnes, William and Eloise  
 Branche, Bonnie Shelton, Leonard and Ruth Drumm, Rosemary and  
 George Vincent, Renee Speenburgh, Carol Zimmerman,  
**In memory of Tommy Hall-Rice:** Elaine Santiago

## **Memorials & Honorariums**

### **In Memory of an Animal...**

**In memory of Buddy:** Betty Kyriacos  
**In memory of Spooky Hamrick:** Carolyn Gillespie  
**In memory of Harold:** Nancy McTiernan  
**In memory of Samantha:** Alyson Reeves and Janet Reeves  
**In memory of Miss Gabbi:** Barbara Watson  
**In memory of Jake:** Carolyn Karch  
**In memory of Puss Lickens:** Randy Crawford  
**In memory of Poor Baby:** Judith Greene  
**In memory of Brutus (and in honor of Bud):** Sharlene Deskins  
**In memory of Oscar:** Deborah Forespring  
**In memory of Sampson:** Kim Knowles  
**In memory of Gizmo:** Kay Lanier  
**In memory of Daisy:** Niklas Armin  
**In memory of Onyx:** Elizabeth Norton  
**In memory of Midnight:** Helen Howard  
**In memory of Lucy:** Thomas Raezer  
**In memory of Christian:** Michael Latimer

### **In Honor of People and Pets...**

**In honor of Puff:** Diane Davis  
**In honor of the animals at 407:** Bill Naatz  
**In honor of Craig and Patti Henderson:** Virginia Atkins  
**In honor of Piper:** Greg and Lynne Wilson  
**In honor of Ellie:** Jennifer Zeigler  
**In honor of Brandy and Precious:** John King  
**In honor of Monty:** Angie Smalls  
**In honor of Picasso:** Terry Todesco  
**In honor of Mandy:** Stacey Sullivan  
**In honor of Terry Todesco:** Timothy Thorne

**The SPCA/HS of Prince George's County relies on contributions. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. If you want to help, just fill out and return the form below.**

### **Membership Application/Donation Form**

**SPCA/HUMANE SOCIETY OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, INC. \* P.O. Box 925, Bowie, MD 20718 \* 301-262-5625**

#### **PLEASE CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:**

☐ **MEMBERSHIP (circle one):**      *Single (\$20)*      *Family (\$30)*      *Lifetime (\$100 per person)*

☐ **RENEWAL:** Please check here if this is a renewal membership.

☐ **ADDITIONAL DONATION:** I am enclosing an additional gift in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*I enclose the additional donation IN MEMORY OF:*

*A person:* \_\_\_\_\_ *A pet:* \_\_\_\_\_

*I enclose the additional donation IN HONOR OF:*

*A person:* \_\_\_\_\_ *A pet:* \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **VOLUNTEER:** I am willing to help in the following capacity:

**TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **(PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE SPCA/HS OF P.G. COUNTY, INC.)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

*All donations and dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please complete this form and mail with payment to the address above.*

## Crazy for Josie *(continued from front page)*

cabinet. Then I noticed a little pile of fresh sawdust next to the expensive coffee table I had just bought. Twice we came home to find several of the balusters on the stairs chewed. Thank goodness for Bitter Apple spray and the fact that my husband is a carpenter!

Even though I only worked three days a week and Josie was never alone more than about seven hours at a time, we decided we had a separation anxiety issue on our hands. We began confining her—but not in a crate—when we were gone to keep her away from the expensive “chewables.” We also decided that getting Josie a dog of her own might be the answer. Enter Jeeves, another rescued JRT. His presence helped a bit but Josie’s love of chewing continues to this day...although it’s tapered down to maybe one or two illegal things every six months or so. She’s probably about five or six now (we don’t know her exact age) so maybe she’s finally growing out of it. We can only hope.

In retrospect, one might think us crazy for putting up with all of this. Crazy yes...crazy in love. I have never in my life met such a sweet little dog. There’s no one Josie doesn’t like or who doesn’t like her. She’s always there to greet you, wagging her stumpy little tail with her furry ball in her mouth. She could sit for hours in your lap, soaking up the attention. Once I jokingly suggested that we take her with us to a large convention. “Are you kidding?” my husband sputtered. “That dog would run out of spit!” Yes...along with all her other problems, it seems Josie’s a “lick-a-holic.” Hmmm, I wonder if there’s a twelve-step program for that?

My point in writing all of this is to express my gratitude for the efforts of the SPCA/Humane Society of Prince George’s County on behalf of homeless animals and for taking a chance on a little dog like Josie. To be sure, no matter what, she’s found her “forever home” here with us.

*by Lorri Mechem*

## HEADS & TAILS

*is published by the SPCA/Humane Society of Prince George’s County (SPCA/HS). Editing and layout: Pam Townsend*

*Individual membership to the SPCA/HS of Prince George’s County is **only \$20** and includes a subscription to Heads & Tails. Your vital support will help us reduce animal overpopulation, homelessness, and mistreatment in Prince George’s County. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

## Mark Your Calendars! The Fifth Annual Dog Adoption Reunion is June 10

Join in the fun from 1 to 3 p.m. by the carousel at Wheaton Regional Park. Fosters and adopters (and the dogs they love) will have a chance to socialize while enjoying food, beverages, and games. Check the website or email [info@pgspca.org](mailto:info@pgspca.org) for details.

**It's About  
the Animals**

