

# Friends of the Shelter Newsletter

Volume VI



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## Give A Loving Senior A Second Chance

*From the Arizona Daily Sun*

11/22/2004

No, this isn't the geriatric version of the dating game. November is "Adopt a Senior Pet Month" so I thought I'd give you all the good reasons to bring a senior pet into your life.

We all love puppies and kittens -- those playful, wriggling balls of fluff are often irresistible and are the first to be adopted. But, consider this: cats and dogs rocket through infancy in six short months and then struggle through adolescence for 12-18 months. That cute puppy time doesn't last all that long, and then you have a teenager! Most animals calm down after their second year, become more affectionate and better at sharing quiet moments of companionship.

Many times, adult pets are house trained and over the chewing/digging/scratching stage. You may think that older pets in shelters are "problem" animals but in reality many are surrendered because of the death of a guardian, a marriage split, a change in work schedule, a new baby or spouse or moving to a place that doesn't allow pets.

Older pets may have some obedience training, or at least understand "no" and how to walk on a leash. They have been socialized and may

get along just fine with other pets or children. If you have toddlers, an older pet may be gentler and easier to handle. Often, older animals that have been in a caring home appreciate love and attention and will quickly learn what's expected of them to gain and keep that love.

Dogs and cats that have been family pets enjoy sitting with you while you read the paper, finish your coffee, and are usually instant companions ready for walking, hiking, car rides or games of fetch. They know the routines and are eager to please!

Adopting an older cat or dog also gives you the advantage of knowing how big they will get (they're already there) and about their temperament.

What you see is what you get. And don't worry about bonding -- senior pets can and do bond strongly with their new families. Many seem to understand that they've been given another chance at a happy life and they are grateful for the chance to love and be loved back.

If you are concerned about vet bills for that older pet, it is important to know that veterinary attention and medication are needed at all ages and aren't necessarily more for older animals. In fact, regardless of their age, all pets need good nutrition, exercise (albeit less intensive for older dogs) and regular checkups and vaccinations. As with any adopted pet, you should get as much health information as possible from the shelter and then take your new buddy to see your vet as soon as possible.

Sometimes older pets may walk in your door and be right at home. Others may be traumatized or stressed by the loss of their previous family or time spent in a shelter. Adjustment time will vary according to the animal's circumstances and personality, but a little time, patience and understanding will soon bring them around. And, contrary to the old adage "you can't teach an old dog new tricks," dogs can be trained at any age -- and may even teach you a few new tricks!

People have asked me about adopting an older animal soon after the death of a beloved pet. They are afraid of the pain of losing another in a few years. I have always felt that, while you can never replace the

pet you lost, saving another animal's life is a wonderful tribute to the bond you shared. And we all know that there are no guarantees about length of life with any pet -- quality of time together is more valuable than quantity. And there is something special about giving one of these sweet creatures some truly "golden years" that you will both enjoy.

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## Torah

*By Maria Patterson*



***Torah came to the Los Alamos Shelter FULL of energy and needing just the right home. She found people who love her: Tamela, Al and Maria Patterson. Torah is loved and happy, as you can tell by Maria's (age 9) story.***

Torah likes to jump out of the yard to say hello to dogs on our street, lay on me (Maria), stand on the doghouse, nap under the couch, and comfort her little (*doggie*) brother Ocito.

**Favorite food is: Everything except avocados.**

**Best trick is: Jumping 6ft in the air vertically while catching a ball, escaping from anything, and doing a back flip 4ft in the air.**

**Favorite toy is: A red squeaky toy, a piece of knotted rope, and a glove.**

**Other things: Torah is great at jumping so we are hoping we can socialize her and train her for agility.**

**She is only happy if she sleeps in my room so she can guard me.**

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## Jethro's New Home



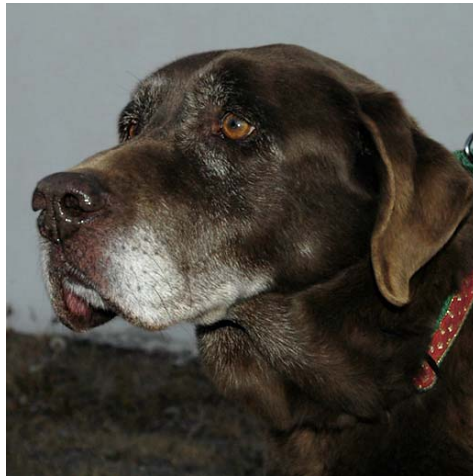
*By Christine Peters*

**Jethro is doing great! He has adjusted very well to the family, especially my 3 year old who just adores him. We take him on a walk or run every day and he and our other dog love to chase each other all over the yard all day long. We really love having him become a part of our family. Thanks for allowing us to adopt him.**

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## **Hank, the Cowdog**

*By Diann Mills*



**Pete Forman had no intention of getting another dog right away after his dog, Brea, died. But Dr. Kathleen Ramsey called Pete's daughter, Katy and said "there's a dog that needs your dad!", so Katie arranged for Pete and Hank (previously Jethro) to meet.**

**Pete said there were 5 criteria that this new dog had to meet: he had to be housebroken, had to be able to use the doggie door, had to walk off leash when they hiked in the forest, had to not eat cats, and most of all had to really like people.**

**So Pete was reluctant, but agreed to give Hank a try. Hank won over the family right away and one by one proved he was up to Pete's five-criteria challenge. Pete has learned that Hank is totally deaf, and in spite of that, he responds well to hand signals and keeps Pete in sight.**



## **Iris Finds Her Voice**



**"Dear Friends of the Shelter,**

**One year ago today two strangers, and an even stranger cat, found me living through cold and scary nights in a culvert. My leg had been badly injured and I was very hungry and alone (except for the coyotes ! could hear prowling around at night). These strangers took me in and found me a doctor and we all learned that I needed an expensive operation. The Espanola**

shelter, who "owned" me then, said they could only afford to euthanize me. Somehow my doctor at Valley Vet knew about you. Thanks to your kind donation to my cause, I got better. It took some time and it took even longer for me to learn to love humans. I was very scared and I intentionally made myself difficult to adopt out. But I had a plan. I knew that if I could not get adopted for long enough AND if I could get my foster parents to super-love me I would get adopted by my sweet foster parents. My plan worked! Now I have two grumpy brothers (Osiris, a tabby and Marten, a longhair gray) and two adoring parents (I consider them my human "pets"). Thank you so much for giving me a chance to be happy and very spoiled.  
Love, Iris

p.s. This photo was taken two months after my surgery. You can see that my fur hadn't grown back yet.

p.p.s. As you can see I have some Siamese in me. I must thank you for giving me my voice. It is the perfect tenor to keep my brothers and human "pets" in line.

p.p.p.s. Please use this donation for another struggling cat like me."

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To find out more information about animals available for adoption, call the Los Alamos Animal Shelter, 662-8179

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Volunteers who can help with cat adoption questions:



Nyree Cox 662-2054, Peter Roberts 662-2652  
Ruby Turner 662-7615

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**Volunteers who can help with dog adoption questions or for  
information on volunteering:**

**Wendee Brunish 662-3252**



**Sally Wilkins 662-2773**

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**If you have questions or would like to make a donation:**

**Friends of the Shelter  
162 Chamisa St.  
Los Alamos, NM 87544**

**Or email:**

**[sitstaygooddog@earthlink.net](mailto:sitstaygooddog@earthlink.net)**

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(See samples below)



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