



Snuggles



Suzi

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A tale of two Cockers



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**We
miss
you**



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**Flying
Cocker**



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**Horsin'
around**



Steve and Alayne with blind and deaf Katie, an adorable little munchkin. We introduced Katie and her brother Spencer in our last issue, and they are two of our disabled animals who are available for adoption.

Remarkable stories

We have been blessed with many wonderful adoptions over the years, and the most remarkable ones often end up in the newsletter. The story of Suzi and Snuggles is indeed remarkable in many respects.

It starts, as so many of them do, with deeply caring people rescuing these two girls in the first place, and then sending them to us when no one else would take them. The story ends with kindhearted people welcoming the dogs into their homes. Along the way, we served mostly as matchmaker – with our blog as the “dating site” that brought Suzi and Snuggles to the attention of their new families.

For all the happy endings we also have some sad ones. That comes with the territory, but it never gets any easier. Losing Briggs was one of those unexpected shocks. Yet we remember the terrible pain he was in when he first came to us, and how much we were able to do for him. His short three years with us were filled with love and joy, and we wouldn't trade that for anything.

But no matter what we do – whether it's being a matchmaker for dogs like Suzi and Snuggles, or providing the best medical care for a dog like Briggs – it's only possible because of your generous contributions. On behalf of all these special animals who benefit from your gifts, thank you!

Steve Smith and Alayne Marker, Co-founders

P.S. We're going to be changing our name in the next few months to Rolling Dog Farm – being a “ranch” just doesn't fit in New England, and everyone here calls us a farm anyway!

How you can help

The best way to help the animals at the sanctuary is with a cash donation. You can mail a check or make a secure online donation at our website.

The sanctuary is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization and runs 100% on donations. Contributions are tax-deductible. Your gifts are what make this place possible. *Thank you!*

In memoriam: Blind Briggs

In February 2008, a blind and wobbly Beagle came to us from a Georgia rescue group. His eyes were bulging from runaway glaucoma, and he was in terrific pain as a result. It turned out he also had kidney disease, and in trying to find the cause of that problem, our veterinarians found Briggs was suffering from an untreated case of Rocky Mountain spotted fever, which he had contracted in Georgia. It was the spotted fever that had caused the neurological condition that made him wobbly, destroyed his eyes, and triggered the kidney disease.



Despite all of his challenges, this little dog was full of life and zest. Our vets went to work on him, and it wasn't long before he was pain free and his kidneys restored to health. And while he remained blind and wobbly, Briggs fancied himself as a real ladies' man, always eagerly greeting new female dogs who arrived here. They were never too sure what to make of him as he approached; he looked like he'd had a few drinks too many, and he could never have passed a sobriety test by walking in a straight line. But in his mind he was a real hunk of a fellow, even if no one else saw him that way. When he wasn't chasing the ladies, he was rolling around on his back in the sun or lounging in the living room, snuggled with friends.

And then, just one month shy of his third anniversary with us, we lost him to inoperable tumors that had engulfed his colon, spleen and pancreas. It was far too soon, as it always is. But we knew he'd had the best years of his life with us, and we were grateful to have that time with him.

Annual Report Now Online

We've just posted our 2010 Annual Report on our website's In The News page. It's a 3-page PDF document. The first two pages are a narrative description of the year, and the third page has the financials.



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A tale of two Cockers



One came from New York, the other from Michigan. One was brash and bold, the other meek and shy. Neither was considered adoptable at the shelters they came from, and yet both were spoken for as soon as they appeared on our blog.

Snuggles was the brash and bold one from New York. The shelter's vet had just removed Snuggles' right eye because of glaucoma, but she could still see from her left eye. She arrived on a volunteer Pilots 'n Paws flight, and we could hear her barking from the back of the single-prop plane as it taxied in. This was our first clue that Miss Personality had landed.

We wrote on the blog the next day, "Snuggles is a complete character and one very happy girl ... she's running around the house, jumping up and down, barking, throwing herself on her back on a dog bed and rolling and rolling around and then barking as she rolls. She follows us everywhere."

One person who read that blog post was Dr. Ellen M., a veterinary specialist in Colorado and a long-time supporter. She emailed the next day, asking if Snuggles was available for adoption. You can imagine how thrilled we were to have a veterinarian adopt one of our special animals!

While we were working with Ellen on Snuggles' travel, Anne R., who runs a Michigan rescue group, asked us to take a blind Cocker named Suzi. Despite months of adoption efforts, no one came forward. Anne wrote, "When I have taken her to adoption events all that happens is that people want to have us take her out of the crate so they can see her, but they have no interest in adopting her. They just want to look at the dog without eyes. I get very upset because they treat her like she is some kind of freak show."

As luck would have it, the same pet transport company that was going to take Snuggles out to Colorado was able to pick up Suzi in Michigan for us and bring her to New Hampshire. So we literally swapped Cockers that day - Snuggles going out, Suzi coming in!

The day after we posted Suzi's arrival on our blog, Marcia S. from Connecticut, another long-time supporter, emailed asking to adopt Suzi. One week later, Marcia drove up here, met Suzi, and took her home! Marcia wrote later, "She is absolutely wonderful. My other dogs greeted her so gently, as if they knew she was special. She is finding her way away around so quickly and has a good appetite, sleeps all night and chose the big dog bed.... She is very affectionate and she and I just love to cuddle. She slept on my lap wrapped in a Christmas blanket all the way home. It really was 'love at first sight.'"



Marcia sent us this photo of Suzi with her granddaughter. For a dog once considered a "freak show," what an amazing difference.

Meanwhile, back in Colorado, Ellen told us "Snuggles is quite a character. She has definitely moved in and bonded to me immediately. She never lets me out of her sight." Ellen sent us this photo of Snuggles with her other dogs, and she wrote: "Thanks so much for saving her and posting her on your blog."

The flying Cocker

Just before Snuggles left for Colorado, we were taking her photos for this newsletter when she grew tired of being a model and started to droop. Alayne went for some dog treats to perk up her interest. In that top photo Snuggles is looking at the cookie Alayne is holding overhead.

Then suddenly Snuggles leaped into the air, all four feet off the ground, spun around, and came down in a perfect landing. In a flash, she had pulled off this amazing acrobatic stunt.

We looked at each other, somewhat astonished. Snuggles walked back across the floor to Alayne, and when Alayne didn't immediately hand her the cookie, Snuggles leaped into the air and spun again. She got the cookie this time.

As you can imagine, we started taking photos, and every time Alayne would hold out a new cookie for her, Snuggles would perform her airborne trick before getting it.



Rolling Dog Ranch Animal Sanctuary



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Holly helps us with dishwashing chores by doing the "pre-wash." She sneaks into the dog room, picks up the dishes still in crates, brings them out, sets them down, and then methodically licks them clean.

About the sanctuary

The Rolling Dog Ranch Animal Sanctuary is home to many types of disabled animals. Our residents include blind dogs, blind horses, blind and deaf dogs, blind cats, and animals with other neurological and orthopedic disabilities.

Although these animals may have disabilities, they do not consider themselves handicapped. They just want to get on with life and enjoy themselves. Thanks to the support of the sanctuary's friends, that's what they get to do here.

Yet these are the animals who are the least likely to be adopted and among the most likely to be euthanized in traditional shelters. That's why we focus on the disabled.

Steve Smith and Alayne Marker founded the sanctuary in 2000 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization known as a private operating foundation. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

The sanctuary covers 120 acres of pasture and forest in the White Mountains of northern New Hampshire. We care for about fifty animals on average, and we are supported 100% by donations. *Thank you for your kindness!*

Horsin' around

Most people don't think blind horses are capable of goofing around and playing with each other, but this they certainly do. We took these photos this past winter of our blind 4-year old Cash pestering his much older and bigger pasture mate, blind Bridger.

Cash sneaks up behind Bridger to bite him on the butt. His rear legs are positioned so he can spring up and out of the way, in case Bridger kicks:



After landing a nice bite through the blanket, Cash whirls up and away:



And then he takes off at a sprint, trying to put a safe distance between him and Bridger as fast as possible:



Alas, as you can tell, Bridger didn't even budge...which kind of takes the fun out of it for a young punk like Cash!