

Open Your Heart to Rescue!



WINTER  
2003

# Springer Tails

## Mid-Atlantic English Springer Spaniel Rescue

### *President's Corner by Monica LaPolt*

The call came on a Saturday afternoon, Jed was missing. Apparently, Jed escaped from his transporter's car when he stopped to clean up after Jed's accident. Jed ran across four lanes of traffic, found a break in a highway barrier, and disappeared into a neighborhood. He was gone.

Phone calls flew back and forth. The volunteer responsible for the next leg of the transport came down and joined the search. We followed the protocol, calling shelters, animal control, and local police stations. No Jed. There were a few spottings and that kept our hope up. We thought we'd get him by the end of the weekend and all would be good. Our big fear was the cold. Maryland was experiencing a record-breaking cold snap and we were worried about his ability to survive the night.

The next day, Sunday, was heartbreaking. A volunteer saw Jed and called to him. He started to come to her, got spooked and ran off. We began canvassing the neighborhood. We hung posters, tracked Jed's movements, talked to residents and planned how we would find Jed. Working in our favor was that Jed seemed to follow a course, showing up every two hours.

We set up a lure for Jed, sat in the car and waited, and waited. Finally, Jed showed up. We thought we were silent, but something spooked Jed and he ran off. We called to him, but he wouldn't come. I took my own dog out with me that day. I hoped that a friendly dog might make us more appealing. Alternatively, with Jeremy's training, I hoped that he could track Jed. Both efforts failed.

Monday was a holiday. We hung more posters. We expanded our search. No Jed. A local resident, Bill Midgett, continued to leave out small amounts of food for Jed. He even fired up his grill in hopes that it would lure Jed. Still no Jed. Spottings became less frequent. We never gave up hope but the worry grew. It was bitterly cold - Jed was not car smart. Would he be okay?

*Continued to page 5*

### **WELCOME TO OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS!**

Linda Abrams  
Mechanicsville, VA

Betsy and Paul Murphy  
Long Valley, NJ

Patti Cripps  
Oxford, PA

Susan Adamovitz  
Gaithersburg, MD

Carole Alderman  
Virginia Beach, VA

Karen Bobic  
New Castle, PA

Debbie Boss  
Phillipsburg, NJ

Joan Cromwell  
Washington, DC

Louisa Dieck  
Greensburg, PA

Stephanie Donofrio  
Philadelphia, PA

Wanda Durant  
Hanover, PA

Moya Doss  
Spotsylvania, VA

Barbara Finnan  
New Castle, DE

Christine Jenkins  
Roselle Park, NJ

Christy Lanham  
Salem, VA

Debbie Ricker  
Jacobus, PA

Jean-Marie Tate  
Cross Lanes, WV

Jill Wallen  
Wilmington, DE

Beth Ward  
Rockville, MD

Renee & Todd Weidman  
Clarksburg, MD

### **Volunteers are the heart and soul of MAESSR.**

**If you would like to find out more about opportunities to volunteer, please contact Linda Foster at [RescueESS@yahoo.com](mailto:RescueESS@yahoo.com)**

## Calendar of Events

### **February 8 – Pet Expo, Richmond, Virginia**

For information and to help, contact Kim Bolster at [ess4x18@cs.com](mailto:ess4x18@cs.com)

### **March 1 – “Everything is Coming Up Springers” Quilt Raffle Tickets Sales start!**

For Information – Barb Bennett at [SpringerTwo@aol.com](mailto:SpringerTwo@aol.com)

### **March 15 and 16 – PawsAbilities, Harrisburg, PA**

For information and to help, Krista Nelson at [biotune@comcast.net](mailto:biotune@comcast.net)

### **April 12 – Delaware Pet Fair, Bear, Delaware**

For information and to help, Heather Young at [youngh1@hotmail.com](mailto:youngh1@hotmail.com)

### **May 17 –South Jersey Yard Sale Cherry Hill, New Jersey**

To donate items and to help, Heather Young at [youngh1@hotmail.com](mailto:youngh1@hotmail.com)

### **June 7 – Strawberry Fair, Ashland/Hanover, Virginia**

For information and to help, Katie Smith at [haymaess@msn.com](mailto:haymaess@msn.com)

### **June 7 – Dog Days of Skippack, Skippack, Pennsylvania**

For information and to help, Heather Young at [youngh1@hotmail.com](mailto:youngh1@hotmail.com)

## THANK YOU!!

### Gifts in Honor of:

Barbara Breeden - Billy and Faith  
Barbara and Gerald Sedam - Chelsea  
Mary and Lee Beach -  
the marriages of  
Krista and Greg Beach,  
Kathy and Don Welker  
Christopher Klein -  
Dean and Maryann Stiles  
Donna and Cliff Laing - Mollie  
Mary Heitmann -  
the adoption of Griffin  
Joan and Jim McCreary -  
the adoption of Becky Sue  
Cynthia Clement - Billy  
Deborah Boss - Chase and Fritz II

### Gifts in Memory of:

Bernard and Donna Thompson -  
Link and Summer  
Lynne Safrit - Hannah Safrit  
Kimberly Bechtle -  
Mike Schmidt and his loyal  
ESS, Olivia  
Y2K9s Dog Sports Club -  
Patricia Graham  
Dave Sewter - Blaze  
Barb and Buzz Bennett -  
"Our Charlie"

### Friends of Faith

Carole Alderman  
Melany and Gary Libby  
Richard Gatlin  
(multiple donations)  
Angela Barton  
Heather Young  
Janet and Joseph Tomko  
Joan Cromwell  
Roberta Hirsh  
Margaret Oakes  
Wendy Hogan  
Lisa Williamson  
Mary Barnes  
Megan Brown  
Edith Seese  
Roberta Pierce  
Jane Neff

### The Rhett Fan Club

Denise Velegda (multiple gifts)  
Rob Pattison (multiple gifts)  
Richard Gatlin

### Gifts

Patty McDonnell  
Lorie Bruckhart  
Herman Steele  
Mr. and Mrs. John MacLaughlin  
through Fidelity Charitable  
Gift Fund  
Bentley Systems -  
Matching Funds program -  
Jill Kirschman  
Isabelle and Barry Chewing  
Sharon Sames  
Joan Cromwell -  
for heartworm treatment  
Gisele Nadeau - thanks for your  
help in talking with us about  
our Springer issue  
Lois Boyer

## ESSentials By Teri Wiley

Networking, an essential part of business today. *"The people you meet today can become your single greatest resources for success tomorrow. No matter who you are or what your goals may be, there will always be somebody somewhere in a position to help you. The secret is to have as many of those helpers as possible available to draw upon when the need arises"* (Apple One website)

Networking in **RESCUE** is even more important as our clients can't speak for themselves! If just one person listed the number of people they know, this would be upward of 50-60 people. Multiply that number by 7, to discover 350 RESCUE groups found on the Delaware Valley Breed Rescue list. This all breed listing covers four states, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey! Can you just imagine the number of groups across the other 46 states?

There are 150 recognized AKC breeds, each with a national rescue group, and countless state and local rescue organizations. All Breed rescue organizations work with the millions of unwanted, abandoned mixed breed dogs. The common thread - we are all focused on finding the best "forever" home for a warm, furry companion.

Every time one of us attends an event wearing our MAESSR t-shirts, checks a shelter, transports a dog, participates in conformation, agility, or any other pet related activity, we are **NETWORKING**. Use this opportunity to learn more about other breed or rescue groups. Keep in mind that this one person, may be in a position to **HELP** in the future.

Some of you may be familiar with the Emails coming into MAESSR from other breed rescues, asking for our help in transporting a dog. Several of us watch the Internet or check out shelters for Springers. Watch for other breeds while you are there. Take the time to alert other rescue groups. Many of us have done so. Remember, one kind gesture deserves a return favor. So the next time you see a cry for help, no matter which breed, consider offering your time and talents. We all need each other to continue this great work!

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## Ukrops and Food Lion - Shop and Help the Dogs!

For those in the central Virginia area, the grocery stores Ukrops and Food Lion are well known. Both have fund raising programs that enable you to help MAESSR.

MAESSR is participating in the Ukrops Golden Gifts Campaign. The program runs from February 3 through March 29, 2003. Whenever you use your UVC card during this period, your purchases will be electronically recorded (one point for every dollar spent!). Then in May, you will receive a certificate showing "points" you have earned. Send the certificate to MAESSR and MAESSR will receive a part of the contribution dollars!

Food Lion has introduced the Food Lion Shop & Share program and MAESSR is a participating partner. For funds to reach MAESSR, you must register your MVP card choosing MAESSR as your organization. This can be done through the website ([www.foodlion.com](http://www.foodlion.com)) or by calling 704-633-8250, ext 3810. Once your card is linked to MAESSR, MAESSR will receive a percentage of your grocery total. This program goes all year.

Both of these stores have provided an easy and convenient way to help raise money. Any questions, please contact Kim, [ess4x18@cs.com](mailto:ess4x18@cs.com). Please shop often!

[www.maessr.org](http://www.maessr.org)

# Calendar 2003!

MAESSR is again publishing a calendar featuring our very special dogs. We are looking for photographs that show the Springer personality, are balanced (no part of the body cutoff!), in action or posed, and all the ages of dogs we rescue. The **deadline is March 31<sup>st</sup>** to submit your pictures.

## Calendar Contest Rules

1. Only MAESSR dogs are eligible, owner-relinquished dogs are included.
2. No humans in the photograph, although other family pets may be included.
3. Color photographs only. Do not send Polaroid pictures. Photo size must be 3" x 5" or 4" x 6". Picture can be vertical or horizontal. No limit on the number you can submit.
4. Write a brief description of the dogs past or present life. Please include the MAESSR contract number or the dog's pre-adoption name.
5. Submitted pictures and stories will not be returned and may be used in future MAESSR publications.
6. Send your photos and background information to MAESSR Calendar, PO Box 15354, Richmond, VA 23227.

Please contact Kim Bolster if you have any questions. Make your Springer a star!

## “Everything Is Coming Up Springers” 2003 MAESSR Quilt Raffle

Watch the website and newsletter  
for quilt ticket information.



Sewn by Nancy Liss



Sewn by Leeny Glass

## Friends of MAESSR: Goochland Veterinary Clinic

Goochland, Virginia is located halfway between Richmond and Charlottesville. It is however, the epicenter of MAESSR's central Virginia efforts. It is the home of Dog Intake and Foster Home Coordinator, Debbie Lipsey. It is also home to the Goochland Veterinary Clinic.

Drs. Washburn and Marlino and their staff are true partners. The Clinic has seen over 75 MAESSR dogs – preparing them for their new homes and families. The Clinic will always find the time to see one of our dogs and gives a very generous discount for all the services provided. Like any good friend, the clinic staff shares in the joys and heartbreak and continually asks about the many dogs they have helped to new lives.

MAESSR's success and ability to reach and help so many dogs is built on friends like the Goochland Veterinary Clinic.

## A Letter From a Special Senior

Do you think an older or handicapped Springer will not have enough energy for your family? Think again! Here is a letter from Norman, an older fellow with only one eye. He writes to us to tell us about his first day in a **Forever Home!**.....

“Thanks for helping me find my new mommy. She picked me up last night and we didn't get home until very late. I completely tested her limits when we first set out in the car, (I chewed through my food bag and ate as she was driving. Then I decided to climb all over her to test her driving skills.) She shouted at me! Can you believe it? It was a big loud “NO!” and I settled down immediately. I knew she meant business. We got home around 2:15 AM and took a walk around the block. I marked at every house occupied by a dog. It's important to let everyone know I am here and it was too early to bark so I decided to mark. I came inside and discovered this brimming toy box and began to haul the toys out one by one. This is definitely a good zip code....wonder if they have Trick or Treating for dogs? I was a bit shocked when she let me sleep on the bed. I have never slept with a human before. At first, I thought I was supposed to



sleep on top of Mommy but then realized that she just wanted me next to her. I would say we both got more rest when I figured that out. We went to the dog park this morning (It was empty) and had a good bit of exercise. I was then greeted by three of the neighborhood humans and one of the neighborhood dogs. I did very well. I sat at every corner and sat and stayed when there was traffic. I was well rewarded with lots of praise and ear scratches and one treat at the end of the walk. Later we went over to PetsMart to pick out a bed and a crate. (I prefer the crate and don't seem to know where to sit without it.) Mommy's friend told her that I would probably prefer to select my own bed. Isn't that a hoot? I mean, who could concentrate with all the different sights and smells? I let her pick one that she thought was pretty. Apparently, you are not supposed to take all the toys you can reach. Mommy said something about shoplifting but, frankly, I did not understand what she meant. “

Love, Norman

**Editors Note: Norman is owned by Joan Cromwell and very happily resides in Washington D.C.**

## DOGGY TRUISMS

### AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Rules for dogs to live by and be applied in their everyday pursuit of companionship and to maintain their reputation as “man’s/woman’s best friend.”

**IN BATHROOMS:** Always accompany guests to the bathroom. It is not necessary to do anything while there, however. Just sit and stare. Panting in their faces or kissing is optional.

**AT DOORS:** Do not allow any closed doors in any room. To get door open, stand on hind legs and claw with forepaws and whine. Once door is opened, it is not necessary to use it. After ordering an “outside” door opened, stand halfway in and halfway out and think about several things. This is a particularly important procedure during very cold weather, rain, snow or mosquito season.

**ON BEDS OR RUGS:** If you have to throw up, get to a bed quickly. If you cannot manage a bed in time, get to an oriental rug. If there is no Oriental rug, any carpeted surface will do. When throwing up on carpet, make sure to back up as you do so, making it as long as a human’s bare foot. This rule also applies to any other accidental bodily function.

**FOR HAMPERING:** If one of your humans is engaged in some activity and the other is idle, stay with the busy one. This is called “helping” (otherwise known in human terms as “hampering”). The following are the rules for this activity (whichever term you prefer):

When supervising cooking, sit or lay behind the left heel of the cook. You will not be seen and therefore stand a much better chance of being stepped upon. This action usually followed by intense hugging and then comforting and possibly even some food or treat.

For paperwork situations, paw at their lap for attention, making sure to bump their writing arm as to MAKE them pay attention to you. When they put down their pencil or pen, grab it and run.

When a human is holding their newspaper in front of him/her, be sure to wedge head under the newspaper, thereby ripping it up the center. If this does not work, resort to paw action as outlined in rule # 2 above.

**WALKING:** As often as possible, dart quickly and as close as possible in front of the human, especially on stairs, when they have something in their arms, in the dark and when they first get up in the morning. Or, simply stand up quickly when being stepped over (most effective for larger dogs). This will help human’s coordination skills.

**WALKING ON LEASH:** Whenever possible, wrap leash around human’s legs. Dart after anything that moves and especially if human is not looking, so to catch them off guard. When leash becomes entangled in your own legs (human’s fault), stop abruptly and yelp in pain.

**BEDTIME:** Always sleep on the human at night so he/she cannot move around. At the very least, sleep on top of the covers so they are trapped.

## True Identity Found

By Faith/Tursi  
with help from a friend

Hi, my real name is Champion Telltale Aquarius better know as Tursi. Many of you know me as Faith. It has only been since January 22, 2003 that I’ve known who I really was.



My new mom and dad had company over for dinner; this is when I start getting my memory back. When Celie Florence walked in the house, I started sniffing her. At the same time she began to recognize me. Wow, my memory started flooding back.

I was born, raised and loved at Telltale Kennel. When I was old enough, I was sent to Robin Novack who showed me to my championship. On my return home, I was the proud mother of three litters. Mom thought I would like to retire to my own private home. Celie thought we had found the perfect home. It was with a wonderful family who had four children and a fenced back yard. They came to the kennel a couple of times to make sure we all got along. Mom and I thought this was a great situation. My new family agreed to spay me in one month. This was one of the main conditions of my placement. Now my memory gets cloudy. The next thing I remember is being in the loving arms of Katie.

I really want to thank everybody in MAESSR for saving my life. If not for all of you, I hate to think what would have happened to my puppies and me. My first mom has accepted all responsibility for my vet care past, present and future. This will free up money to help other Springers in my situation. Again, I cannot thank you enough for saving my life and giving me a second chance.

# The Training Corner

By Isabelle Chewing

## Jump Into Agility!

What is agility? Agility is team sport for dog and handler teams. Agility courses look like playgrounds for dogs with jumps, tunnels, seesaws, weave poles, and various obstacles to climb. The object is for the handler to direct her dog through a timed course without making a mistake such as knocking a bar off of a jump, or taking an obstacle out of order.

What does it take to get started? First, you need a healthy dog. Springers, because of their willing attitudes and high energy are good candidates for agility. Next you need some basic equipment. Jumps and weave poles are easy to make from PVC pipe, and there are several websites that provide the necessary instructions. Good instruction is also helpful. Although you could buy a book and train successfully alone in your backyard, agility classes are fun for both handlers and dogs. Many kennel clubs, dog training clubs, and training facilities offer agility classes; you might also check with your city or county recreation department to see what is offered. And finally, you need a sense of humor. Springers can be very inventive when it comes to agility, and sometimes prefer to design their own course rather than follow the one laid out by the instructor or judge. Just keep in mind, though; that there is probably nothing you and your dog can do in an agility ring that hasn't already been done!

Jump heights are determined by your dog's height at his or her withers. In AKC agility, Springers generally jump 16 or 20-inch jumps, but you should start lower at the beginning, with your jumps about the height of your dog's elbow. Let your Springer sniff the jump, then, with the dog on a loose lead, give your jump command (usually "hup," "jump," or "over") and trot him over the jump. Make it a game, use lots of treats, and praise lavishly!

To learn more about agility, try to go to a local trial as a spectator. Chances are, you will be hooked! MAESSR hopes to sponsor an agility fun match this year where you will get to see dog and handler teams practice for agility trials, and have an opportunity to do some obstacle familiarization with your own dog. Watch for details. In the meantime, check out these websites: [www.cleanrun.com](http://www.cleanrun.com), [www.agilityability.com](http://www.agilityability.com) and [www.dogpatch.org/agility/](http://www.dogpatch.org/agility/).

**Training Triumphs:** Cliff and Donna Laing report that their **Mollie** is one of the MAESSR dogs who is performing the job for which Springers were originally bred: hunting. **Mollie** works all three whistle commands, as well as verbal and hand signals... Donna Downing Mitchell and **Chelsea** make regular visits to two Alzheimer's patients in a nearby assisted living facility. **Chelsea's** visits help these two patients to recall happier times... 7-year old **Maggie** (owned by MAESSR volunteer Barb Bennett and adopted through ESSCLI) received her CGC title last October... Hayes and Katie Smith report that **Faith**, despite her health problems, has learned to sing on command! What a versatile breed we have!

*Monica Lapolt*

*Continued from Page 1*

Days slipped by, where was Jed? Was he living in someone's home? Had he not made it through one of these brutal nights? Worry mounted, matched only by our uncertainty.

Finally, another sighting! We explored several plans but they came to naught. After what seemed like a million phone calls, MAESSR borrowed a humane trap from animal control. We set it up in Bill's yard and the wait began - again.

Success! Within less than 24 hours, Jed was in the cage! Safe at last! There was much cheering, stomping of feet and rejoicing. Jed was hustled off for an overnight visit to the vet.

From the vet, Jed came to me for fostering. Several questions remained unanswered. Was he now food aggressive? Had he lost his trust of people? Had he developed any bad habits or obsessions? It was with great relief that the answers to all of the questions were No! Jed was a little shy at first, but within a short time he had settled in with us, crawling into laps, asking for attention, playing with our dogs.

The call went out to the home that had waited for nearly two weeks. Did they still want him? Did they understand that he needed lots of love and feeding? Their response was heartwarming. "When can we get him?"

Only a few short days after his "capture" Jed was handed over to his new family. After perhaps the longest transport on record, Jed settled into with his new family seamlessly. It is the happiest of endings. MAESSR extends its heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated or offered to help in the search for Jed. Especially though, thanks to Joyce and Ray Thomas, M-D Kerns, Bill Midgett and Al Walgreen.

I leave you with a little song written by Bob Peters shortly after we got Jed back.

The Ballad of Jed (not Clampett)

Come and listen to my story bout a dog named Jed,  
Escaped for a week,  
Never got his belly fed,  
Then one day they caught him in a trap,  
He said I'm kinda tired, gonna take a two week  
nap!!!!!!!!!!!!

Well the next thing ya know old Jed's a happy pup,  
Fed him two big bowls,  
He ate those suckers up,  
Now old Jed's as happy as can be!!!!!!!!!!!!  
Gonna get himself a brand new family!!!!

Spoiled that is!!!!  
Doggie treats, belly rubs!!  
Ya don't run away again, ya hear!!!!!!!!  
Good boy!!!!!!!!!!!!  
Welcome home Jed!

## Do You Remember?...Tabitha

By Mary Beach

Then....

**Rt.61, the Pocono Mountains, PA...Winter 2000**

A State Trooper picks up two thin and straggly Springer strays who appear to have been struck by a car. He takes them to a local vet who works to stabilize their health as one has a badly broken leg. The vet contacts the SPCA, initially but then finds MAESSR and the dogs are taken into foster care. Laura Brennan fosters the one with a broken leg who is named Tabitha. She immediately undergoes surgery to have a plate put in her leg. Recovering slowly, she begins to hobble around on her cast and learns to play with the children and Great Danes in her foster home. Lillian and Erwin Schuster kindly transport her from Pennsylvania to New Jersey for vet appointments. She has a skin problem that can't be corrected until her leg heals and she's very thin, but she blossoms into a typically energetic Springer and plays non-stop with her favorite toy, a basketball! In the spring, Gloria and Harry Steilmeyer adopt Tabitha. It is love at first sight, and Tabitha enjoys a stop at a pet store to pick out supplies on her way home!



Now...

**Berwyn, PA...Winter 2003**

Tabitha enjoys the good life! She is a healthy 42 pounds, and her skin problems have been treated and cured; her coat is thick and shiny. She has had successful eye surgery, and the plate in her leg had to be removed. Remarkably, the bone is completely healed and she suffers no consequence from her terrible injuries! She loves hanging out with the family cat, chasing squirrels, sleeping with Mom and Dad, but playing with balls is still her favorite pastime. (If there is no one around to throw her ball, she will throw it for herself!) She's especially sweet with children. Her mom says she is a whiz at opening gifts...and it seems she gets a lot of them! Tabitha still sees the wonderful lady who transported her to vet appointments, as she has become Tab's Mom's close friend.

## Springers in The News !!!

### Travels with Charlotte

From the January 24, 2003, Congress Daily, published by the National Journal:

When newly installed Minority Whip Hoyer ascended the leadership ladder and assumed the Capitol offices of the House's second-ranking Democrat, he brought with him one of his most trusted confidantes. "I'm a little reluctant to do this interview because of this exposé you're doing on the woman I live with," Hoyer told *CongressDaily*. But Hoyer could not resist talking about Charlotte — a beloved 11-year-old **English Springer Spaniel** who has become a prominent personality in Hoyer's third floor office suite. Like a top aide, Charlotte has free rein of Hoyer's office — and she occasionally wanders into the hallway to visit Capitol Police officers or passing tourists.

After his wife, Judith, died in 1997, Hoyer did not feel comfortable leaving Charlotte home alone. While he was at work one day, Hoyer said Charlotte suffered an accident that resulted in 22 stitches. "A couple of months after my wife died, Charlotte got injured," he said. "I couldn't leave her outside. I couldn't leave her inside for 14 or 15 hours." Hoyer began bringing Charlotte into work with him, and the temporary arrangement became a permanent routine. Thus Hoyer became the latest in a line of prominent congressional Democrats — including former House Speaker Foley, the late Rep. Les Aspin of Wisconsin and, most recently, Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts — with canines whose visibility on Capitol Hill occasionally rivaled that of their human companions.

Hoyer usually walks with Charlotte in the morning and evening, and an aide takes Charlotte outside during the day. Hoyer said the move from his former office in the Longworth building to the Capitol confused Charlotte at first — but he said she quickly found her way around the corridors of power. "She was discombobulated when we got to the third floor. She didn't know if she should take a left or a right," observed Hoyer — himself regarded as something of a centrist within his party. "She has now got the drill down." Staffers at the House Periodical Press Gallery, just across the hall from Hoyer's suite, report that Charlotte is a favorite among reporters, Hill aides, and visitors. One gallery regular, who also has an English Springer Spaniel, described Charlotte as "very loyal" and good at keeping tabs on Hoyer's whereabouts. And, perhaps, she is picking up some pointers from her new neighbors in the Fourth Estate. Noted the regular, "She's very curious and is always checking everything out." — *by Mark Wegner*

## *The best volunteer activity!*

By Louisa Dieck

“Omigosh, what HAVE I gotten myself into?!?”

Although I kept that thought strictly to myself, Debbie Lipcsey intuitively knew this question was at the front of my mind as we spoke after I picked up my very first foster dog for MAESSR. I must preface this article by stating that the conditions of my household are very different from other fostering households, and therefore my story is quite different. I live only in the company of the king of this castle, my 4 year old neutered male, and had ill-prepared him for the dramatic change his life would take after I welcomed in our guest, another male, 3 years older and 15 pounds heavier than my Quinn. Most other foster homes that I know of include both adults and children, as well as at least two other dogs to provide attention and diversion... a much more substantial pack than mine. What you are about to read doesn't happen in most foster homes!



The first few days with our foster were like hosting Arafat and Sharon under the same roof, Quinn was starring in the role of Arafat, striking frequently and without notice when both my guest and I least suspected it. Although not reduced to tears, I was highly concerned during the first week for the safety of this new dog that I was trying to HARBOR and remove from harm's way! Our guest, Sebastian II, is the perfect gentleman, understanding of his kid foster brother's jealousy... “Don't you cozy up to MY food lady,” Quinn frequently reminds him. In fact, Quinn frequently harps at Sebastian about anything and everything, but this habit is easing with each passing day.

Well, a woman is allowed to change her mind, right? I couldn't have gotten myself into anything better: fostering is, hands down, the best volunteer activity in my life! Fostering, for me, has proven to be educational, intellectually and spiritually nourishing, and emotionally very, very fulfilling.

The first piece of education came when I adopted this foster from the local animal shelter, an incredibly over-stretched and under-staffed facility. My heart ached when I picked Sebastian up one day after his neutering. The poor lad had experienced post-operative vomiting, and no one had bothered to clean him up! The second piece came when I attempted to introduce both dogs at my kennel, a neutral ground, where there would be plenty of staff on hand to guide and distract the pair in their initial hours together. This plan was quashed when Sebastian's suspected canine cough (he'd been vaccinated, and it turned out to be a spate of reverse sneezing) prevented him from being admitted. The introduction in the kennel's lobby went well enough, but Quinn had no intention of sharing a little Honda Civic with Sebastian for the 45-minute ride home!

The third piece of education came upon meeting my new neighbors. “So, this is a rescue dog? You mean he rescues people, right?” Or, “I'm deathly afraid of dogs, but yours look so fun and nice that I HAVE to meet them. Will they jump?” Educating my neighbors on the nature of rescue and reaching out to timid folks has pointed out the “givens” I carry in my mind and taught me to present the dogs and MAESSR's mission in a much more informative, ambassadorial way.

Fostering has encouraged me, intellectually and spiritually, to reach out to MAESSR's experts and readership for ideas, advice, and support. More importantly, has caused me to look within myself to figure out how to achieve domestic bliss with two very loving and very different dogs. I thought that Quinn was the be-all-and-end-all, a bench boy without much grace but a lot of goofy charm, fond of taking walks around the neighborhood with his favorite stuffed toy peaking out from his jowls. Then, enter Sebastian, a field boy, entirely focussed on playing with a tennis ball and having you throw it, but willing to entertain himself by nudging and then chasing the ball on his own. As each dog is incredibly intrigued by the other's toys, I've learned to play simultaneously with both, focussing each boy on his “strong-suit” toy and thus preventing competition for my attention.

I've found great delight at discovering Quincy's and Sebastian's similarities (fondness for biscuits and ear rubs) and differences (Quinn is up at the crack of dawn, Sebastian would rather sleep 'til noon, literally rubbing his eyes and groaning at Quincy's premature start of every day, just like I do.) Watching the two walking side-by-side (oh, they both pull at the leash, and now I've discovered muscles I never knew I had!), playing in the yard (Sebastian's all business, but Quinn likes to roll in the snow, scent the breeze, and check out the people on his street), and engaging with one another (sometimes gently, sometimes not) has provided me with great wonder at the beauty and breadth of these saintly creatures known as English Springer Spaniels.

Finally, I thought that I had love enough for only one dog. I now know that my love is boundless for all and now find myself madly taken to two be-all-and-end-all dogs. There is nothing better than having each dog snuggled up to me, one on either side. I suspect that when I take in my third foster, should Sebbie still be living with us, I'll have to find a third side!

**Editors Note: If you would like more information about MAESSR's foster home program, please contact Debbie Lipcsey at [springerfarm@aol.com](mailto:springerfarm@aol.com) or at the mailing address on the back of the newsletter.**

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