



THE ROAD HOME K9 RESCUE

1520 E. Covell Blvd. B5, PMB 125, Davis, CA 95616

President's Message

By Tracey Louper



2006 was a very good year for The Road Home K9 Rescue. Thanks to the efforts of all of you, The Road Home was able to send more than 60 collies off to their happy forever homes. Cathy and I wanted to end this year with our first newsletter, and the opportunity to keep you up to date on the amazing effort that you all made happen.

December of 2004 found us settling into the routine of kennel cleaning and feeding and medication schedules at UC Davis. December of 2005 we were braving weather to transport dogs to collie rescues north and south. This year we are trying to get back to the routines of the holiday seasons that we knew **b.c.**, before collies.

News about The Road Home K9 Rescue:

On-going Yolo County Collie care

Just because we no longer have 60+ Collies to care for doesn't mean The Road Home K9 Rescue has been dormant. Several of the Yolo County Collies are drawing on the Girlfriend Fund, so Cathy continues with her fund raising.

The Road Home stands gratefully in awe of those people who willingly adopt dogs in full knowledge of ongoing medical issues. For those who provide the heart and dedication to love these dogs we are glad to be able to provide financial assistance. Since the dogs were released to The Road Home fourteen have died. We take comfort in the knowledge that those dogs were treasured and well cared for in their last days. There are currently at least six dogs with chronic health problems resulting from their poor breeding and unsanitary and inadequate care.

The Road Home K9 Rescue continues to support these collies in both adoptive and foster homes. The Road Home asks your help in sustaining The Girlfriend Fund. To donate, visit our website at: <http://theroadhome-dogs.org/collies/yolo.htm>.

The Legacy Fund.

We have also a new project in the works, The Legacy Fund. The idea for this project came from Cathy's and Tracey's despair at being unable to help one family that called upon The Road Home.

The family had adopted a lovely purebred dog through a rescue organization. His past included earning points in the breed but he somehow ended up in the county animal shelter and subsequently, in rescue.

His new owners were given bad advice regarding training methods and as a result this dog developed a biting problem. By the time his owners came to us for help, they had neither the time nor the will to rehabilitate him. The Road Home was still overwhelmed by the Yolo County dogs and had no place to foster him while providing training. The dog was euthanized, a victim of human ignorance and late intervention.

The broad goal of The Legacy Fund is to keep dogs in their homes. It will support an educational campaign to promote positive reward-based training and offset a portion of training fees for those owners who seek help from a professional trainer.

Wrap-up of the Yolo County Collie case:

December 5th, 2005 was the day Chauncey Wilson finally was forced to relinquish his collies. It and September 29, 2004 are now included on the list of days I will always mark. Now, a year later, having had time to adjust to life after kennel work, I am trying to get a vision of the big picture. Once the dogs were released everything happened so fast, I can't even remember how many trips I made transporting dogs.

Since fewer volunteers were needed and allowed once the dogs were moved to UCD, I imagine that many of you lost track of them and would appreciate knowing what happened to the dogs you helped to save. I am, by the way, serious about that characterization. This was a remarkable project undertaken by a small county and would truly have been impossible without the help of so many. A friend asked me, last summer, if I regretted spending so much time working with the Collies. I responded, without hesitation, that it is one of the things I have done in my life of which I am most proud. I hope you all feel the same way. You played a part in bettering a number of lives both human and canine.

Eighty-one dogs were ultimately relinquished by Chauncey Wilson. Seventy-one were impounded September 29, 2004,

Ten were relinquished to animal control during the preceding three months.

Nine of the relinquished dogs were adopted through California Collie Rescue Coalition (CCRC). One was euthanized for humane reasons. Three of the nine died before the case concluded. As of this writing, the other six are happy and thriving.

The twelve puppies impounded were sent to foster homes. All but two were adopted by their foster families as soon as they were released. One little blue bitch, Mollie, was as smart as her mother, Lucy Lee, so we held out for the right home. We found it and she was adopted out through The Road Home late summer of this year.

Petey, the "runt" lives happily with Cathy in ongoing hospice care. He should not have lived as long as he has, plagued by kidney failure and irritable bowel disease. Petey however, doesn't know he is stunted and supposed to die. He thinks he should be the boss of Cathy's pack, and continues to defy the odds.

It was the 59 adults that we volunteers ultimately came to know and love, which makes the next statistics so hard to write. Of those 59, six died in the kennel. The thought of these dogs dying without ever knowing a semblance of the life they deserved galvanized Cathy, and she began actively seeking to foster the remaining 53 even before the legal case was resolved. Wanting no more deaths in the kennels, Cathy found foster homes for 14 of the dogs. It was not an easy choice, deciding which would be fostered. We tried to get the seemingly oldest dogs out first, and those whose temperament or medical condition made the kennel a particular hardship. We feel good about the choices we made. No more dogs died in the kennel, although one did die in foster care before the dogs were relinquished.

When the judge finally released the dogs, we were ready. The ten puppies and the 13 "early release dogs" were immediately adopted by their foster families through Yolo County Animal Services. Three other Collie rescues stepped up to help disperse the remaining dogs.

Okanagan Collie Rescue (OCR) out of Vancouver took nine dogs, including Jamba, the smoothie and Honree, the little tri bitch who bared her teeth we she barked. (Honree was the only dog whose departure made me cry.) Despite a couple of harrowing escapes from foster homes, all nine of the dogs found forever homes. One of them, Mica, died surrounded by his new family, this September.

It took three trips to get all the dogs to OCR. Gene Lock and I each drove Cathy's van to rendezvous with Maria from OCR in Oregon. Then Maria took the last two when she came to Davis to attend the volunteer appreciation dinner.

It took another three trips to get 11 dogs to Southland Collie Rescue (SCR). An SCR volunteer came to Davis before

Christmas to make the first transport from the kennel to freedom. It took me two trips to Bakersfield to deliver the rest. Unfortunately, SCR took the greatest share of grief as well. Two of the dogs died in foster care, and one of the adopted dogs, Chief Joseph, recently died in his forever home.

NorCal Collie Rescue (NCR), the successor to CCRC, took in four dogs and found forever homes for all of them. One of the four has died.

That left 16 dogs for The Road Home K9 Rescue (TRH). Two of our dogs died in foster care, Teddy and Thomas. Dart and Petey are in permanent foster/hospice care, and Otis, the dog everyone loved to hate, was adopted by Cathy, but died this summer. The other 11 have been placed in forever homes as far away as San Diego, Portland, and Colorado, and as close as Davis.

Due to the vagaries of life, two dogs were returned to The Road Home. The puppy, Shrek, was immediately adopted by one of our premier foster homes and is now the darling of the Glotzbach household. The other is Scotty, whom you might remember as the small sable male with the head tilt. He has had a malignant tumor removed from his thigh but luckily it is of a slow growing kind, and he is thriving in the company of fellow yolos at Cathy's house. Recommend him to anyone looking for a spry older dog.

There you have it. Eighty-one dogs removed from a torturous environment. Seventy-four survived to experience life in a loving home. Sixty still enjoying a better life thanks to your help. Seven sacrificed to remind us of and keep us dedicated to the continuing fight against ignorance and cruelty.

Postscript

During the writing of this article, Petey succumbed to the circumstances of his birth. He was a bright, cocky, spirit who under Cathy's loving care became quite self-satisfied. A light has gone out in Cathy's home, but I am sure it burned as long as it did because of her. We wish him and our other "lost yolos" a much better life next time. They deserve it.

The Yolo County collie case: A tribute to the volunteers



By Cathy Toft

December 5, 2006 marks the first anniversary of the "Yolo County" Collies' release to be adopted into loving homes. Tracey and I wanted this anniversary, along with the season of light and hope, to be an opportunity to thank all of you for your role in making the salvation of 81 collies possible.

Soon after this date last year, many people asked me how it felt to return to my normal life. That event, or rather process, is still not completed, but yes, this particular chapter of my life is coming to a close. Right after the dogs' release came many intense months of finding all of the dogs loving homes and tying up a myriad of loose ends. There was no time to thank you then, but at last we have the time to thank you now.

Like Tracey, I will always mark these dates: September 29, 2004 when the collies came into our care and December 5, 2005 when they began officially to leave our care. I will also mark another special date, March 12, 2006. That was the day that the last two dogs left the kennel at UCD. I was to pick up Curlee in mid-afternoon to deliver him to his foster home. Tracey was to arrive a few hours later to collect Fanny and take her home to foster her (and ultimately adopt her). As I harnessed up Curlee and led him out of the kennel, I was aware of the symbolism of my act, but I was completely unprepared for what happened when I stepped out into the gray light of a drizzly late winter Sunday afternoon. After all, this wasn't taking the *last* dog out of the kennel—that honor would be Tracey's. Nevertheless, as I stepped outside with Curlee, I was suddenly overwhelmed with emotion, in an intense wave that swept over me. I felt light headed and had to catch myself. I quickly shook it off and refocused, as after all I had a reluctant "yolo" on a leash and had to be vigilant like I'd been for the past nearly 17 months.

So March 12, 2006 ended the longest chapter of a saga that started in earnest on the morning of September 29, 2004. In the events that led up to the day that the dogs arrived in our care, I had assured Yolo County that somehow we'd be able to do this. Often during those early days, the enormity of what I had agreed to do gave me burning pains in the pit of my stomach. Yet there was no other choice that I could live with. I'd had the five years from the time that Chauncey Wilson moved into Yolo County to think about what I'd do if the county called on me. I'd often felt guilty for not doing more, knowing

what was happening a few dozen miles from where I lived. I therefore resolved to give it my "all" if the county asked me. Eventually, in July 2004...they did, and I did.

My "all" wouldn't have done the job however, because I'm just one person, one with no authority or resources, only the will to try what should have been impossible. The task wasn't impossible because of all of you. Using the kennel logs, I calculated (to prepare to testify during the endless hearings) that the care of the dogs while in the kennels at UCD, and earlier at the fairgrounds in Woodland, had required 65 person-hours per week at an absolute minimum. That time was devoted to caring for between 55 and 60 adult collies, feeding them twice a day, cleaning their kennels once a day, playing with each dog for 1-2 minutes per day, collecting and hauling off the barrels of laundry, daily monitoring the dogs' health, and grooming a handful each week. Of the time logged in, Animal Services contributed around 3% of the time required to care for the dogs. The volunteers contributed over 75% of the minimal care of these dogs at UCD and more at the initial triage center at the Yolo County fairgrounds. This 65-hour week was just the time logged into the kennels and did not include the long trips to the Vet Med Teaching Hospital or to Grooming by Elaine's and Fo' Paws. This time did not include the care of more than a dozen dogs in foster homes at any one time. And this time did not include an endless array of other activities required to support the care of 71 dogs, including the fund-raising, the organizing of volunteers, and the interfacing with Animal Services and the District Attorney's office.

Over 100 individual volunteers contributed to the care of the collies during these 17 months, 7 days a week, when the dogs were held in official custody. Of these volunteers, a pool of around 20 were responsible for the dogs while they resided in the UCD kennels. Of those, four volunteers logged in 48% of the kennel time: myself, Tracey Louper, Heather Zavatson, and Elise Penner,

For Tracey Louper, I cannot give enough thanks nor can enough be said about what she contributed to this venture. She stood beside me through thick and thin, with fierce and unwavering loyalty and commitment to the dogs. What the volunteers accomplished would not have been possible without Tracey. I often started to think of what would have happened had Tracey not been on this team, and each time I had to push the thought out of my head because the alternatives were unimaginable. Tracey logged more time in the kennels than any other single person, 20% of the 65 hours officially and many dozens more hours per week of unlogged time. She did this at great personal sacrifice yet never once faltered or regretted this commitment. I always knew that she couldn't have lived with herself had she walked away from the dogs.

Heather Zavatson had no intention of doing more than donating a bag of dog food and a few hours of kennel work on the morning of Saturday, October 2, 2004, when she arrived at the Yolo County fairgrounds only a few blocks from her home in

Woodland. She became the backbone of the volunteer effort, not only logging in the second highest number of hours of any other volunteer, but keeping a coherent, organized and happy working team together for many long, tedious, discouraging, tiring months.

Elise Penner completed the core team by being the one volunteer who would always pitch in wherever or whenever Heather, Tracey or I asked her to, in addition to the two days each week that she covered kennel cleaning while the dogs were at UCD. Earlier, when we were at the Yolo County fairgrounds, Elise was the glue that held our operation together. No matter what was going on in her life, if Tracey or Heather needed help covering a feeding or a cleaning day, there was Elise to the rescue.

We could not have survived the long months without many other devoted volunteers who “stayed the course” with us, despite the hardships these demands made in their lives. Pat Gunter and Gene Lock were pivotal volunteers from the fairgrounds days on. The UCD team included them, David Wilkins, Kim Munoz, Juliana Sorem, Cynthia Roberts, Jennie Keifer, Betsy Ramsy, Georgia Johas, Jessica Morton, Connie Cowley, Rick and Linda Aeschliman, Marjie Cherry, Laurie Rossi and Mitch Telson.

Many more volunteers were required in the initial phase of the project. There was the day of impound, when ten brave souls (two teams of five) agreed to get up in the dark and leave Woodland before dawn, under cover, for the trek to Esparto. They worked in T-shirts and tennis shoes side by side with uniformed officers wearing bullet-proof vests. Four of the troops suffered casualties when they were bitten by the frightened dogs. One in particular, Sue Larson, ended up in the emergency room and without full use of her hand for weeks afterward. Special thanks go to these people, each and every one of whom hesitated for not a second when I asked for their help: Tracey Louper, Sue Larson, Sue Bailey, Susan Anderson, Jen Larson, Alana McQuarry, Katy Robertson, Cathy Bones, Karen Boselly, Ken Boselly, Amanda Cannan, and Drs. Cindi Delany and Meg Pimentel, the two veterinarians who performed the dogs’ evaluations.

At the fairgrounds, the willingness of many other volunteers to wade into those chaotic times will forever be etched in Tracey’s and my memory. Andrea Moss, who’d volunteered at “Camp Collie” in Montana, a similar animal cruelty case involving over 180 collies, organized the initial triage center. Darrell Hanks kept the kennel running like clockwork by working full time for the first month. More volunteers served than I can list individually here, but special mention needs to go to the members of the Two Rivers Agility Club of Sacramento, ably led by Sue Larson. TRACS and its members also donated more funds than any other single entity thanks to the work of many club members—this group of civic minded people cannot be thanked enough.

Lonnie Wunder, master of the Yolo County Fairgrounds, and

Yolo County volunteer Laura Minnis, Wonder Woman herself, truly saved the day, as did Dr. Lon Kendell of the UCD Veterinary School and his able staff, most notably Regina Garcia, Donna Fry, and Kerry Eigard. Without them, we’d be nowhere. Thanks to them, the dogs had a safe haven for the duration of the case, and the volunteers were able to care for them. UC Davis also provided life-saving help in the form of devoted veterinarians and students at the Vet Med Teaching Hospital, and the behavioral interns led by Emily Gan, who prepared the dogs for life as pet dogs. Other local veterinarians at Animal Wellness Center, Yolo Veterinary Clinic and Woodland Veterinary Hospital, Animal Care Clinic of Woodland, Aggie Veterinary Clinic of Dixon, and Dr. Kris Codino, provided devoted care for these dogs.

During the adoption phase, dozens more volunteers came forward in the form of foster homes and collie rescue volunteers who helped us place the dogs. Special mention go to Andrea Moss of NorCal Collie Rescue, Chris Harmon and Sue Baldwin of Southland Collie Rescue, and Maria Zerjav and Janet Lamont of Okanagan Collie Rescue. Finally, the many patient and understanding heroes who adopted these needy, deserving dogs made the Happy Ending possible.

Resolution of the legal case

Tracey has included in her letter news of all the dogs. I want to finish my letter by telling you about the legal resolution of the case. I first need to emphasize that all of the elements and signs of the mental disorder of “animal hoarding” surrounded this case. Animal hoarding is a serious and dangerous mental illness when it is allowed to continue untreated for years. Not only are the animals themselves at risk, but the hoarder is typically suffering from self-neglect, depression, and anxiety or addiction disorders, and the family members from forms of neglect, abuse or other hardship.

One of the most bizarre aspects of animal hoarding is the profound denial and inability of the hoarder to see the reality so obvious to the rest of us. As a result, this owner fought long and hard to keep the dogs and the other animals. Although he was entitled to a speedy trial, my opinion is that he intentionally chose a strategy to drag the case out and wear the rest of us down. Because of the determination of the volunteers, Animals Services and the District Attorney, he could not use this tactic successfully as he had in Contra Costa County. The volunteers deserve the most thanks for preventing this strategy of attrition from working. Although we despaired each of the many times a hearing was continued, we could not leave the dogs, who we’d come to love, each and every one, as the unique and self-aware individuals that they are.

Eventually, we prevailed. The mountain of evidence prevented the defense from challenging the integrity of the case. Instead, a skillful defense attorney won the owner a sweet plea bargain deal, in which he could walk away a free man in little over two

years from Dec. 5, 2005, the day that the dogs were surrendered as part of that bargain. However, the man's mental illness went untreated, and in only a few months he was found in violation of the conditions of the Dec. 5 court order by being in possession of a dog. On July 10, 2006, the former owner was convicted of the two felonies and one misdemeanor that remained as part of the plea bargain. He was sentenced on Sept. 27, 2006, nearly two years to the day from the time the dogs left his possession.

Tracey and I thank each and every one of you, from the depths of our hearts, for your part in helping these collies. Thanks to you, 81 gentle souls had a chance at knowing the pleasures of being clean and well fed, safe and loved. Although not all of the 81 got the time in this new life that they deserved, 60 of them are with us on this day. Let us bless them and wish them long and happy lives in their forever homes.

A Tribute to the Donors

Many generous donors stepped up to support Yolo County, a small rural county with limited resources, in taking on such a large-scale case, arguably the largest and most complex animal case in its history. Hundreds of individuals donated to this cause: The Road Home K9 Rescue has prepared a financial report and donor acknowledgement to be found on our web site:

<http://www.theroadhome-dogs.org/collies/yolo.htm>

Our benefactors included: Helga Kane and the Collie Heath Foundation, who rushed to our aid immediately, Pati Merrill and the Collie Club of America, who was there for both moral and financial support, Jean Levitt of the American Working Collie Association, whose advise sustained me daily for 17 months and was arguably more important than the significant financial support given us by AWCA, the PetCo Foundation, many local collie clubs across the county and in California, the Sacramento Valley Dog Fanciers, Two Rivers Agility Club of Sacramento, Davis Dog Training Club, Solid Gold of Northern California, Rick Aeschliman Fine Art Studio, and more...

The GirlFriend Fund

The GirlFriend Fund is an endowment sponsored by The Road Home K9 Rescue to support the veterinary care of the Yolo County collies in perpetuity.

Many of these collies suffer permanent health conditions as a result of their neglect and abuse. Adopters and fosterers took them in and love them anyway. The Road Home K9 Rescue is currently supporting six of the dogs in foster and adoptive homes. Any Yolo County collie is eligible for these funds.

Thanks to your generous donations, the Yolo County collies are getting the best possible care. Among them, Petey enjoyed your support and lived for more than two full miraculous years. To donate and find out more visit these web pages:

<http://theroadhome-dogs.org/collies/yolo.htm>

In Memory Of:



Thank you all.



THE ROAD HOME K9 RESCUE

1520 E. Covell Blvd. B5, PMB 125, Davis, CA 95616