



April 30, 2010

Dear Friends,

Hopefully this is the last time for the rest of the year you'll have to look at snow – and just think this photo was taken only a few weeks ago! It shows our former shelter dog "Hunter" with his women – both of them love to go hiking, and Hunter really hit the Megabucks with Pam, his caretaker! Thank you Pam, and thank you Susanna from DDB –Dogs deserve better- , a rescue in the southern part of Maine. Susanna has been helping us finding homes for our animals, and thanks to her Hunter is now as happy as a flea in a chicken coup 😊😊 Or a fox in the henhouse, well, you get the meaning.

Great news in Limestone: Three days after Easter, our Teddy came back! He is still limping some, and after walking on all fours for ten yards or so he still goes down on his elbows like he did last year when his leg was broken, but he survived! He is missing one eye, which does not seem to impair him much. He knows exactly where his food is. What has changed though is that he has become much more comfortable with us, or maybe dependent on us? For the past ten years he kept a safe distance until last year when he was hurt. Then he came within ten feet of our kitchen door and laid down, waiting for food, or maybe just feeling more secure close to the house than out in the woods where he could not defend himself, due to his injuries. Even though he seems to be pretty well healed, he still comes and lays down a few feet away from our back door. When we open up the window and holler at him to leave, he gets up and moseys back into the woods. He has also developed an appetite for birdseeds which he had never wanted before. I put a bowl outside filled with seeds; he lies down, wraps his paws around the bowl and munches.

Funny, too, that he never turns this bowl over or carries it away, like other bears do. So Jim and I, and Teddy, are all happy and content again!

We had quite a crazy month at the shelter. Two more dogs found their way to us via a very nice family, which could not keep them any longer. These two are very attached to each other, so they can be placed only together in a good home:



Prinz and Elli

And we lost one (almost, it was one of them lost and found cases). It involved our huskies. Here is their profile:

"Jimmy and Nicholi" –Siberian huskies, 4-year old sisters:

The came from a "bad Shelter", the one I wrote about of and on over the past 10 years. It has been closed down since, thank God. When these huskies came to us, they were so scared of people that they would hide in a corner and actually would shake if you even looked at them from closer than 20 feet away.

Now they run and play with some of the other dogs, and take treats from several of our volunteers. They also love running and playing with Reb and her own dog, Casper. But they still don't let her touch them'

Now to what happened one day last month, told by Rebecca:

"I know that a 40-pound Siberian husky can fit through a hole too small for a mouse, so I usually chaperone Jimmy and Nicholi when they are out running in the yard. But one day I went inside to make a sandwich, because watching them tearing around made me hungry. When I came out, they were gone. Nicholi came back at sunset without Jimmy, but I didn't start to worry until the next morning.

Calls to the Humane Societies, Animal Control Officers, search parties and "missing dog" posters turned up nothing (except for dead chickens and a cold trail) for two weeks. Then one day, a call from the Unity Animal Control Officer. She knew right where Jimmy was and led me there. Jimmy was hanging around an abandoned house. The neighbor was feeding her and trying to catch her to get her to a vet to remove the porcupine quills from her face. I thought something terrible must have happened to that dog. She was so afraid to let me near her the neighbor, Donna, said as we sat in her back yard, feeding Jimmy dog treats and oatmeal cookies. I explained that Jimmy doesn't let anyone within arms-reach of her.

Jimmy wouldn't get into the car or any other enclosed space. No way! But she also wouldn't let me out of her sight. She always stayed just out of my reach, but never more than ten feet away. I sent Mary to the vet to get knockout pills, in the hopes of catching her that way. But they only made her woozy, and I still couldn't catch her.

Finally, as it got dark, I gave up hope of catching her or getting her into the car. I was going to have to walk home with her. We spent the night in the abandoned house. Donna actually owns the house, so she opened it up, turned on the heater, brought me a pile of blankets from her house, along with a yummy tuna casserole, milk and cookies, dog food and a flashlight! Several times during the night, Jimmy pushed open my door to check that I was still with her.

At the crack of dawn, Jimmy and I started walking. I put on my boots and Jimmy's pack, stuck my map and the dog treats in my pocket and off we went. As the crow flies, it was about eight miles home. The way we went was about twice that.

We started off down an abandoned road; a short cut with Jimmy so close behind me that she would bump into my legs if I stopped suddenly. We soon came to a 6-foot wide bubbling brook, the bridge long gone. I walked across on stepping-stones just barely under water. But Jimmy wouldn't even try.

Huskies hate to get their feet wet and are frightened by running water. So we walked upstream on opposite banks until we found an old, broken-down dam with only a 2-foot hole in the middle. I filled the hole with logs and branches and finally Jimmy picked her way across, whimpering and crying. Better to get wet feet than to be left in the woods!

This meant we would have to stick with real roads and avoid streams and swamps. The traffic frightened and disorientated Jimmy, so she repeatedly darted into the road while I frantically tried to keep cars from hitting her! Several times drivers stopped and helped block the road until we got to safety. Finally we were able to turn off the main road onto a smaller road with very little traffic. We were getting tired and stopped several times for a rest and a snack.

Just before noon we crossed the town road where a road crew was doing repairs, chatting briefly with 2 of the crew. "You only have 3-4 miles left to get home" they said. When asking me if I had had my morning coffee - of course I did not; the man gave me his.

Feeling better, very tired, and making time. Then, a river 30 feet wide. A bridge 30 feet up in the air. Made of metal mesh with holes bigger than husky-feet! A phone call to the road crew. "You wait there, we'll think of something." In the meantime, Jimmy and I found a sunny, grassy spot by the side of the road, curled up and took a nap.

The road crew reappeared with a pick-up truckload of plywood scavenged from a recently demolished camp. They laid it down as a walkway across the bridge, then blocked off the road so no traffic could get through. Jimmy and I crossed the bridge in one big rush, blew them a kiss and kept walking.

Almost home, walking down the abandoned road about a mile from the kennel. Jimmy so tired she is just trudging along at my heels, head down, ears down, tail down. The wind picked up and suddenly we hear BARKING! Faint and far away, but our dog-friends, barking up a storm! Jimmy passed me in a rush, her ears and tail way up. About 50 feet ahead she turned, prancing. "Hurry up!" she said, "we are almost home. Hurry, hurry."

I was very tired, so I just kept on trudging. She ran back, got behind me and tried to herd me, push me to move, move! There was still one more stream to cross, about 10 feet wide. I waded across, not quite knee deep. Jimmy panicked. How to get across without getting wet? The water rushed by, gurgling and splashing and Jimmy paced the bank, crying. Then a Splash! She took two giant husky-leaps, landing right in the middle, but made it! Then we hurried, hurried home, Jimmy leading the way. After a welcome home dance and shoulder rub with Nicholi, they lay down together and had a well-deserved nap. It was now 2:00 PM.

Of course there is much more to the story: How I got my car back and how I brought Jimmy to the vet to have the porcupine quills removed; how Donna paid the vet bill and visited Jimmy at home, but we are running out of space.

Thank you so much to everyone who helped Jimmy and I get safely home:

Donna, the nice lady from Unity
Kenneth and Arthur, the road crew
Mary, Ted and Betty, our volunteers
Michelle from Alion who helped search for Jimmy
Susan, the Unity Animal Control officer
And all of you whose names I didn't catch

Here is quite a story: I can't think of too many people who would have done that for a dog.

So not only a huge Thank you from me to all the people mentioned by Rebecca, but also a big

Thank you, Rebecca, from all of us,



and from lucky Jimmy, of course !

Once again, this month, the following supporters of Charley's Strays helped our animals with donations, stamps, care packages, and blankets; we even received an offer from Jean Catignani to buy a new dryer! I thank each and every one of you:

Carole Parker, Stoughton
Cindy Houston, Woburn
Cristine Cardello, Melrose
Dale Critchley, S. Weymouth
Deb Brooks
Donna Bering, Lynn
Donna Wade, Unity
Dorothy D'Alessandro, Ossipee
Dorothy Eckstein, Medford
Enid Hayes, Halifax
G & R Welch, Stonington
George Hinds, Cambridge
Iris Martinello, Tewksbury
Irma Simon, S. China

Jackie Lowney, New Bedford
Jean & Ralph Catignani, Conw.
Jean Tillson
Jo Ford, Holden
Joe D'Alessandro, Tuftonboro
Jon & Barb Anderson, Augusta
Josephine Smith, Woburn
Judy & Al Smith, Belmont
Kellee Lowney, New Bedford
Linda Merriam, Dresden
Lisa D'Alessandro, Raymond
Lorena & Harry Clark, Beverly
Manual German, Reading
Marcia Smith, Bucksport

Marian Delarue, Woburn
Marlene Kaplan, Melrose
Mary Klayda, Winchester
Melody Lavers, Pownal
Mildred Walker, Presque Isle
Nancy Capone, Wakefield
Pat Thain, Dracut
R.D. Bournival, Nashua
Rita Lawrence, Reading
Robert Hull, Lawrence
Sandra Nicholson, Beverly
Susan Borsic, Woburn
The Bachrachs, Petersham

Donations have been way down here lately; I know things are bad for everybody, so I am NOT complaining. So I was thrilled when Karen's parents told us of an auctioneer they were friends with. This gentlemen, did not only auction of a few small pieces of jewelry which had been donated to us, but he waived his fee when he heard that the money was going to a no-kill Shelter. It was close to \$200, and it helped a lot towards the ever-growing vet cost. Thank you very much to Karen, her parents and their friend, who's name I have misplaced somewhere in the labyrinth of my brain. ☺☺

Donna Wade, the lady involved in Jimmy's story, did send me a check and the following note:
"This is to cover Jimmy's vet bill. She allowed me to be her 'mom' for a few days. Thank you!"

Sweet . . .

So again, to all of the above people, and to the one or other I did not mention – people who send packages sometimes don't get 'reported' to Limestone, but their goodies still find the way to our animals ☺

A huge **Thank you!**

***Gabriele, Mary, Karen,
Rebecca, Betty, Ted and Jim***



BUY A STAMP – HELP SHELTER DOGS AND CATS

The United States Postal Service is running Stamps to the Rescue, a promotion to help animal shelters care for and find homes for their pets, from mid-March through May. Animal Rescue: Adopt a Shelter Pet commemorative stamps will be sold beginning April 30. Stamps can also be pre-ordered at www.stampstotherescue.com, the special web site USPS created for this project. If you don't need any yourself, please buy lots anyway and send them to us!

According to USPS information, 300 million 44-cent stamps will be printed. If at least half have been sold by the end of May, there will be a reprint, another 120 million. The reminder posters at post offices will come down May 14, though, so you need to remember on your own after that.

The program was announced March 17 on The Ellen DeGeneres Show, and on April 30 she and Postmaster Jack Potter will start the stamp sale with a ceremony at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in Hollywood. As part of the promotion, Halo, the pet food company DeGeneres co-owns, is donating one million meals to animal shelters.

The stamps show 10 pets, five dogs and five cats, who found homes through the New Milford, Connecticut, Animal Welfare Society. There are photos on www.stampstotherescue.com, and as you put your cursor on each photo you get information about the cat or dog. In the top row, from left to right, are Teddy, a wire-haired Jack Russell whose mother's owners couldn't care for a litter of puppies; Willow, a Maltese cat dumped at the shelter's back door as a kitten; Trevor, one of a litter of yellow Lab puppies left at a construction site when they were barely weaned; Bianca, adopted as an older cat through a special program that lets older people adopt older pets at no charge; and Buddy, a golden retriever whose first family gave him up because his hips were so bad. The bottom row of photos shows Peaches, born wild but evidently now a house cat; Bindi Su, an Aussie shepherd whose mother's owners gave her to a rescue group when they realized she was pregnant; Frankie, brought to the shelter as a sick kitten with his sick mother and siblings; Jake, a Boston terrier whose first family found him too much to handle and weren't allowed to return him to the pet store; and Lucas, a stray cat who turned up in a shelter volunteer's yard. (Such sadly typical stories!)

The USPS collected statistics on dogs and cats in the United States. They found that there are about 77.5 million pet dogs, 19 percent of them adopted from a shelter, with 39 percent of households owning at least one (the majority only one). Three-quarters of the dogs are spayed or neutered; the average veterinary bill for a dog's routine care is \$225. Pet cats are more numerous, 93.6 million. Although only about 33 percent of households have cats, more than half of the cat owners have more than one. Twenty-two percent of pet cats came from shelters. Eighty-seven percent are spayed or neutered. They're a little cheaper than dogs – the average for routine veterinary care is \$203.

The USPS also quoted information from the Humane Society of the United States on dogs and cats who end up in shelters each year: 6 to 8 million. Almost a third of the dogs, but no more than five percent of the cats, are reclaimed by owners. Of the unclaimed ones, about half get adopted; the other half are euthanized. These figures, of course, don't include the surplus dogs and especially cats who live their entire (usually short) lives roaming wildlands or city alleys.

The USPS compiled a calendar of animal-related events for the rest of the year. Please note: May 2-8 is Be Kind to Animals Week, overlapping with National Pet Week, May 3-9. June is both Adopt a Cat Month and Adopt a Shelter Cat Month, and October is Adopt a Dog Month and Adopt a Shelter Dog Month. November is Adopt a Senior Pet Month. It includes National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week November, 7-13 – a good time to think of us and your other favorite animal shelters as the holiday season approaches.

CAT REPORT APRIL 2010

The sad news is that we just lost little Kennebec. He had another of his bad spells, and this time I couldn't pull him through. He would have been eight years old May 1.

Otherwise, all our cats are in good shape. The vet can attest to two of them – Buddy and Mr. Tom were on the spring house call list. Mr. Tom is the very first FIV+ I took in, the one who started the whole FIV room. Buddy, sometimes known as Buddy the Bullet Cat, is the one who came to us with a pellet imbedded in his chest. Heather tried to feel it, but he's so well padded – in spite of a rigorously controlled diet – that she gave up.

Christopher, who was ailing for a while in late February and early March, is still doing fine. He wasn't on the spring list, but while she was at the house Heather trimmed his nails and Lisa's and Pooh's. Because they can't position their feet properly, the three funny-feet tend to get ingrown nails more easily than other cats. Lisa and Pooh will have their 12th birthdays May 11 – another occasion for a catnip celebration. Chris, their half-brother, is 12 to 18 months older. He was a young adult when we took him in with Roo, his and Lisa and Pooh's very pregnant mother, in early May 1998.

Kathy, the lady who adopted Ozzie, emailed me a few days ago to say he's doing fine. He gets along well with her husband, who couldn't come with her when she chose their new cat. Stairs are no problem for his bad leg, Kathy said – he goes up faster than she does. He now gets a small can of fancy cat food each evening, as well as dry food whenever he wants it. Kathy said treat time is 6 p.m.; Oz starts reminding them at 5, and by 5:30 he's trying to open the cupboard and help himself.

As usual, I'm grateful to all the people who help our animals. Some of our new friends – one couple especially – you've just read about in the story about Jimmy, and I'm sure Gabriele has the monthly list of reliable supporters. In addition, I'd like to thank Teresa, her sister Suzanne and P. A. Lenk for coupons; Karen and Olivia Charles for cat food; and Beverly for towels, pillow cases and blankets (some for cats and some for dogs).

P.S. If you have access to the magazine called Early American Life, don't miss the essay on the back page of the June issue.