

# Collie Rescue of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Inc.

2016 Holiday Newsletter

## JASMINE'S STORY

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Sometimes it's hard to know what to expect with a foster. Such was the case with "Jazz," or Jasmine, as she eventually became.

Her former owner had dropped her and another dog off at a shelter, saying simply that he could no longer care for them. Her companion had been adopted, but no one seemed to want the collie. Collie Rescue of SEPA was contacted, and of course said yes, they would take her and find her a good home. Eventually she found her way to us as a "temporary" foster. Keeping her permanently was out of the question. There simply wasn't enough room in the house for three permanent dogs, plus one more foster, and I had no plans to give up fostering.

She arrived skinny, scared, and with a permanently upset stomach. She didn't know how to navigate stairs, and as it turned out, was blind in one eye from an old injury. Her rough collie coat was dragging on the ground, not because it needed trimming, but because she had adopted the permanent crouch of a frightened dog who was ready to bolt to safety at a moment's notice. But she was a collie, and underneath all of that, lurked a sweet, intelligent, playful, happy dog just waiting for the right moment to appear. And she was absolutely gorgeous. A pretty girl like her needed a prettier name than "Jazz," so she eventually became Jasmine.

I had another collie, Rudy, and a black lab mix, Bear, both very close to her in age. Bear had come from his own frightened shelter environment.



Now it was Bear's turn to pay it forward. Bear and Jasmine quickly bonded. Jasmine learned how to go up the stairs very quickly. Going down was altogether different. With only one good eye, her depth perception must have left her thinking she was about to jump off a cliff with that first step. She would pace and whine at the top of the stairs until I would call Bear. "Bear, your sister needs you." Bear would run half-way up the stairs, turn to go back down, and Jasmine would happily follow him. In the yard, Rudy would relax and survey his world, while nervous Jasmine would run the same circle non-stop, barking nervously at anything that moved or might move, until she was allowed to come inside. Only Bear would break her out of that zone while she briefly chased him around the perimeter.

Inside, she was learning to relax. That was her domain. Jasmine was perfectly happy staying on the floor in the living room. Until the day came when she watched Bear jump up on the couch, looked at the floor, then at the couch, and then very deliberately jumped up on the couch next to him. How was I ever going to separate these two?

(continued on page 2)



## Letter from Sam:



2016 has been a relatively quiet year. Still, we found homes for many Collies and a Sheltie or two along the way. Then Bella, Buddy, and Daisy came calling. Bella a 4 year old female, 55 to 60 lbs overweight could not get up on her own, could barely walk, and also had a host of medical issues, including seizures. Buddy, 9 years old, and Daisy, 10 years old, came to us together from a breeder who wanted to reduce her numbers. Both at that time were living in a barn.

Most rescues will not make the financial commitment to help Senior Collies, much less dogs with major medical issues, as they feel it is money not well spent. A small part of me agrees with this logic, but when you accept a Collie into your rescue it becomes emotional. Just because Buddy and Daisy may not have many years left, as a group we all agree they deserve the care and medical attention that your generous donations can provide. For this we are truly grateful.

As this newsletter is going to print, Bella has been adopted, has lost almost 25 lbs, can get up on her own most times, and is now taking short walks around her new neighborhood. She is still dealing with health issues, but is improving as her weight is dropping.

Buddy and Daisy have also found forever homes and are currently being evaluated for spaying/neutering along with dental issues.

All three families are looking forward to the Holidays with their new family members.

So from Bella, Daisy and Buddy and all of our rescues, Collie Rescue of SEPA would like to thank you and wish you and your families Happy Holidays.



*(Jasmine – cont. from page 1)*

After informally polling some neighbors for their opinion, we decided that there would still be room for a fourth dog on a temporary basis, if we filled up the third slot permanently, and Jasmine came to stay for good. She got her own collar, her own name tag, a brand new bowl, and a birthday.

Over time, she learned to be more comfortable in the yard, relax on the back patio, and made friends in the neighborhood. New places and strange people would always be cause for concern on her part, but she did learn to love a limited walk on the sidewalk just outside of the fence surrounding her yard. She knew exactly how far she wanted to go, and she was absolutely happy and content within those boundaries. An agility tunnel would always be a fearful thing for her, but she eventually learned to go over low jumps and even managed a tire jump. Like her brothers, she continued to pay it forward with other fosters. Even if it was just a stray spending the night until returning to their family in the morning, she always welcomed them with open paws.

Long after she had been listed as a “senior” in her veterinary record, I began to notice that she was having some trouble with the stairs. Had her old fears returned? Perhaps it was an issue with her eyesight. I allowed her to begin sleeping on the first floor. A few months went by and I noticed she was definitely having some coordination issues with her back legs and sometimes seemed to be dragging those toes. Some research left me with a nagging feeling that it could be degenerative myelopathy (DM), the canine version of MS or ALS. A genetic test confirmed that she had two copies of the genetic mutation associated with DM, and we entered the next stage of her life with a presumptive diagnosis of something that can only be fully diagnosed in a necropsy. She was almost 13. I understood that this disease would eventually rob her of her ability to move and function, beginning with the back end and gradually moving to the front end. If nothing else took her first, this would be what would steal her from me. (continued)

Jasmine was now a very different dog from the frightened, skinny foster who had arrived several years prior. She was a confident, strong, happy collie. Her increasing issues with her balance and ability to run didn't seem to faze her. She continued to be a happy, content dog, but still one who was generally afraid of new things. When she reached the place where she could no longer use her back legs, would she be willing to try dog wheels? I had to give her the opportunity, so I purchased a set in her size. We tried them, and tried them again, but she just didn't seem to want to have anything to do with them. These could significantly improve the quality of her life and extend it beyond the point where many dogs with DM are euthanized, but I wasn't going to force her. I wanted her to be happy. I set the wheels aside and prepared to manage her DM progression in other ways. Then, a few weeks later, it was as if a light turned on in her collie head and she suddenly decided to embrace her wheels with gusto. Suddenly, she could once again keep up with her brothers in the yard, and out run me to buy more time outside. She rolled through the fall, and winter, and spring. But gradually, I was noticing something else wasn't right. She was losing her gusto in a way that did not seem to line up with the symptoms of DM. Something else was wrong, but I could not point to any one specific symptom or sign.

Sometimes, a 'mom' just knows. It was almost time for her routine veterinary visit, and I was preparing to describe this new set of concerns to our veterinarian, but what would we do? She was almost 14. Suddenly, although not by surprise, there came a day when I knew I was losing her. I was able to keep her comfortable through the night and called early the next morning for an in-home euthanasia. In a single day she had shown me that she was ready and needed to leave. That was scheduled for 4PM that day, but, in true collie fashion, Jasmine took matters into her own hands and died peacefully, on her own, at approximately 1:20PM. It was a week before we would have celebrated her 14th birthday. I won't wax philosophical about what happens to dogs when they die. That is a topic for another article. But I know that they don't leave those who are left behind unchanged. A part of every one stays behind in our hearts, and Jasmine's place will forever be in mine.



# THE HOLIDAYS CAME EARLY FOR THESE COLLIES



**Laddie**



*We share your sorrow in your loss*



**Mike and Kate in your loss of Jake**



**Bill and Alexis in your loss of Oliver**



**Dave, Sharon, Kate, Laura, and Stephen in your loss of Rudy**



**Heidi in your loss of Rudy, and Jasmine**



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**First Class**

**Visit our website, [www.collierescueofsepa.net](http://www.collierescueofsepa.net), and find us on Facebook @CollieRescueofSEPA for upcoming events:**



**Save the date:**  
**Collie Rescue Picnic, 13 May 2017, Celebrating 30 Years**