



Kennel Connection

See Page 3 For Adoptable Pets Available Now!

Vol. 4 Issue 2

Newsletter of Frederick County Animal Control & Pet Adoption Center

Summer/Fall 2018

by Bette Brown

Bella arrived at Frederick County Animal Control as a stray in March 2017. It was her third time at the shelter. And this time, her family chose not to come get her.

When she saw Bella at the shelter, Tracey Paglia was struck by how calm the dog was. Bella's kennel card said she wasn't good with other pets, so Tracey figured she wouldn't be a good fit for her family, which includes cats, Lulu the senior pug, and Spunky the cattle dog.

Still, says Tracey, "I saw something in her the first time I met her." She returned to visit her often. She noticed two little girls who came to see the dog each week. "As soon as Bella saw them, she dropped to the ground for a belly rub."

Meanwhile, volunteers on the



A Beautiful Life

Bella

shelter's Canine Enrichment Team (CET) were trying our best to help Bella survive—psychologically—her long stay at the shelter.

Bella was "reactive" toward other dogs: she barked at them. This is a common dog behavior. Experts believe that it can stem

from frustration when the leash (or a fence) prevents a dog from properly greeting another dog. Alternatively, reactivity can be a manifestation of fear or anxiety and an attempt to make the unfamiliar dog go away.

CET members began walking

Bella with other dogs—at a distance. After a few minutes, she'd relax and stop barking. Some dogs seemed less threatening to Bella right from the start. A socially oblivious beagle turned out to be a perfect walking buddy for Bella because he ignored her while studiously sniffing in the grass.

From our observations, we felt confident that Bella had social potential—she just needed guidance.

One time when Tracey came to see Bella, she wasn't in her kennel. "My heart just crushed," says Tracey. In that moment, she knew that she needed this dog in her life, so she filled out an application.

The challenge would be integrating Bella with Tracey's other pets, especially Spunky. She brought the cattle dog to the shelter to meet Bella. Though the ini-

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Pogo

Lean on Me

What we know of Pogo's story began one evening in May 2018, when Barbara Ryan found her cowering behind some lattice in her back yard. "She was frightened and wouldn't come to me," says Barbara. "I noticed she was hurt on her front leg." Using tuna, Barbara lured her into a carrier, then called Arlene Atkins, who runs Barn Cat Buddies as a volunteer through Frederick County Animal Control (FCAC).

At Arlene's suggestion, Barbara took the injured cat to FCAC. In our initial assessment, we suspected that the cat, whom we named Pogo, had been bitten by another animal. The injury was severe enough that veterinarians at Buckeystown Veterinary Hospital found that they would need to amputate her right front leg, though no one was certain she could survive the surgery in her weakened state.

Arlene began spreading the word about Pogo. Frederick Friends of Our County Animal Shelter (FFOCAS) agreed to pay for Pogo's sur-

gery, and Beth Leetch stepped up to foster Pogo. Concerned animal lovers contributed to the cost of surgery, ensuring that FFOCAS would have enough funds to cover medical care for the next pet in need.

When we found out that Pogo had survived the surgery, we also learned that she hadn't been bitten—she'd been shot. The veterinarian found fragments of shrapnel in her leg.

Beth set Pogo up in a quiet area of her finished basement inside a dog crate made cozy with a bed, litter box, and food and water.

During her first couple of weeks in Beth's care, Pogo and Beth overcame several challenges. Pogo had to learn to balance on three legs. When she took a nose dive, says Beth, "I would carefully wipe her down and set her back on her feet to wobble away."

"I wanted to teach her [how to play with] toys," recalls Beth, "but with only one front foot, that was difficult." So Pogo learned to lie down so she could bat at a toy with her one front paw.

A somewhat messier challenge was Pogo's

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Director's Letter: *Lost and Found*

By Linda Shea with Bette Brown

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals estimates that 26% of lost cats and 7% of lost dogs are never reunited with their families.

What happens to those pets not reunited?

A beloved family pet may be thin, dirty, and matted, appearing for all the world like she's been neglected, simply because she's been on her own for a couple of weeks. A pet who's had a shy, timid temperament since puppy- or kittenhood may, when lost and disoriented, cower in a way that makes us wonder if he's been abused.

It's often for these reasons that finders of stray animals might be hesitant to look for the animal's family. Some simply decide to keep the animal or to find it a new family without even trying to find the proper owners—the people who, more often than not, are good, loving pet parents who are missing their pet terribly.

Although we all see our pets as family members, the state of Maryland considers pets property (as do many other states). Keeping or rehoming a found pet without attempting to find the owner is theft; the consequences of theft often involve law enforcement.

So what should you do when you find a stray animal? Laws differ by county. In Frederick County, we urge finders to bring the animal to the shelter. We are the county's only animal shelter and therefore the common denominator in matching lost pets with owners. We also have the means, information, connections, and/or history to track down owners and expedite returning pets to their families.

Most people know to check the shelter for their lost pets. In addition,

we post photos of stray animals online, and the administrators of "lost pet" Facebook pages share those photos.

Bringing a stray animal to our facility also precludes the possibility of litigation, which could be a risk if the animal becomes ill or injured while in possession of the finder.

Finders who are interested in adopting a pet if the owner is not located can follow these steps for animals found in Frederick County:

- Bring the animal to Frederick County Animal Control.
- Tell staff that you are interested in applying to adopt the animal if the owners are not found and if the animal is deemed adoptable.
- Staff should give you an adoption application and the animal's intake number.
- Fill out and submit the application; keep the intake number in case you call the shelter later to inquire about the animal.

If you decide not to bring a found animal to the shelter, do everything you can to locate the owners:

- Take the animal to a veterinary office to scan for a microchip; the veterinary staff can contact the owner and facilitate the reunion.
- If the animal is not chipped (or if the chip is not registered), file a found report with us by calling 301-600-1546.
- Make flyers and put them up all around the area where the pet was found as well as in pet stores and veterinary offices.
- Post the found animal online on sites such as Facebook lost/found pet pages, nextdoor.com, and craigslist.

In other words, put yourself in the shoes of a person who has lost his best friend. Assume the best, rather than the worst, about the pet's family. Do what you would want done if it were your pet.

■ *Linda Shea is Director, Frederick County Animal Control.*

Work with Us!

Interested in a job helping the county's neediest pets? Keep an eye out for job openings at Animal Control, posted here: www.frederickcountymd.gov/jobs.

Our Mission: To prevent cruelty, abuse, and neglect of animals in Frederick County by enforcing all state, county, and city ordinances to the fullest extent possible. We will shelter homeless animals and attempt to place them in safe and loving home environments. We will educate the public on all animal issues to foster a more aware and caring community.

Frederick County Animal Control & Pet Adoption Center

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frederickcountymd.gov/15/Animal-Control

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POGO

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lack of litter box skills. Luckily, Beth found that Dr. Elsey's Cat Attract Litter did the trick.

After a few weeks, says Beth, "I opened the [crate], giving her a little more room to roam" in her basement space. Beth's senior cat Kiki likes to hang out in the same room and the two cats soon began napping together.

As Pogo became more confident as a tripod and more comfortable in her foster home, Beth learned more about Pogo's quirky personality. She spends a lot of time hiding, reappearing at meal-times. She likes to be carried around so she can see everything that's going on, but if you pet her, says Beth, "she returns the endearment with a nip to the palm of [your] hand." Not everyone would appreciate "cattitude" like this, but Beth does.

This is why, when Pogo was ready to find her forever home, Beth knew that she already had.



Now, says Beth, Pogo "runs downstairs with [my] herd of tiny dogs each morning, watches them all pile outside into the yard, and ... stations herself at the door to watch for their return." At night, she sleeps on the hope chest next to Beth's bed.

"We don't know if she was used as target practice ... or if she was in the wrong place at the wrong time," says Beth. But now, because of the community of compassionate animal lovers, "Pogo will have an inside, spoiled life."

If you see an animal being mistreated, please contact FCAC: 301-600-1544. If you have a spare room in your home, consider fostering pets for a shelter or a rescue organization.

HOMES WANTED

View all of our adoptable pets on Petfinder
(www.frederick.petfinder.com) or Petango (www.petango.com/fcac).
Or stop by for a visit—you never know, you might just find true love!



Gramma Tala

Gramma Tala is an expert-level cuddler who loves kids and wants to be with her people as much as possible. She likes to take her time getting to know new dog friends—once they've passed the test, let the play begin! Bonus: she's great with cats. She's in foster care, so call for an appointment: 301-600-1546.



Titan, aka Apollo

Titan, aka Apollo, would love to participate in a competitive sport ... or just go for hikes and play in the back yard. He loves to go out and meet new dogs and people. Truly a dog you can take places!



Stella

Known for her "fantastic loud purr," **Stella** loves to be petted and brushed. Her allergies require a special diet, but she doesn't mind that one bit. This beauty loves to play, sometimes with her own tail! She's in foster care, so call for an appointment: 301-600-1546.



Esme

A cat bed aficionado, a queen in search of her castle, **Esme** seeks an attentive human who will always be ready to give her affection ... until she's had enough. She requests a calm, quiet, dog-free environment.



Luna

Luna is, in the words of one of her fans, "a total keeper." Initially shy in a new environment, she will come out of her shell and show you how very affectionate she is. The kittens she took such good care of have all been adopted; now it's Luna's turn



Meadow

Found all alone outside, **Meadow** is looking for a family that will keep her safe inside. This active, curious girl has been waiting for her forever home longer than all the other rabbits at the shelter.



Best buds Bella and Spunky

BELLA

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tial meeting didn't go so well, Tracey and her daughters brought Spunky back several more times. Eventually, the two dogs were playing together on leash in the field behind the shelter.

When Tracey brought Bella home, she and her daughter took Bella and Spunky on a walk together. "When I felt like the tension eased," recalls Tracey, "we brought her into the house." The next morning, the family took Bella and Spunky on a long hike for some "no contact" bonding.

For the first week in her new home, Bella was on a leash at all times or was in a crate "whenever we were not able to fully focus on her and Spunk." The cats had their own room, protected by a baby gate, which enabled a slow, safe introduction. Soon, Bella and Spunky were on their way to being best buds, playing almost every waking moment.

Tracey has worked with Bella on her leash walking and on her reactivity toward unfamiliar dogs. She called a trainer for help and has attended group obedience classes. "She's still not great with new dogs and has to be introduced slowly," says Tracey, "but I am better able to handle her."

Looking back at her decision to adopt Bella—now Bella Vita—Tracey says, "Bella is just a dog who wanted to be loved, and ... she needed a job." Now, adds Tracey, "her job is walking with me." When she puts on the leash, Bella "goes into work mode and her attention is focused on me."

"I wanted a social dog that I can take on trips, vacations, and visiting family," continues Tracey. "She has the perfect temperament to visit people, and my dad says she's just the right size. She loves all the attention she gets everywhere we go. People constantly stop to pet her, and she does her trademark drop to the ground for a belly rub."

Don't Surrender Hope

by Bette Stallman Brown

If one were to rate the most common reasons people give for surrendering their pets to animal shelters, “moving, can't take” and “not enough time” have got to be near the top of the list. Seeing these reasons scribbled onto the profiles of shelter animals, it's easy to make assumptions about the previous owner: that she saw her pet as disposable property, or that he brought home a pet without thinking through the time commitment required.

I don't doubt that some people do fit these morally unflattering descriptions. But I think that most people giving up their pets do so only under duress or without full awareness of the risk to their pets and the resources that may allow them to avoid surrender.

Why We Shouldn't Assume

When you talk to people who've surrendered their pets, you usually find out that there's more to the story—details that won't fit on the single line provided on the profile. “Moving, can't take” can mean that the pet owner decided to move and didn't bother to find pet-friendly housing. But it can also be shorthand for a variety of major life changes and personal crises, from losing one's home to fleeing a domestic violence situation.

“Not enough time” can mean that the owner didn't take the time to address a common behavior issue. Or it can mean something we might not guess. Maybe the owner was caring for an elderly parent with worsening dementia while working three jobs and trying to sort out why his cat had stopped using the litterbox, and something had to give.

Alternatives to Shelter Surrender

One way to help pets and their families is to raise awareness of resources that can help pet parents keep their pets when possible, safely find a new home for their pets when necessary, or decide whether surrendering their pets to a shelter is the best or only option.

■ Pet-Friendly Housing

If you're moving, check out sites like www.zillow.com or www.apartments.com and use search filters to narrow your search to a place that will accept your pets.



■ Help Resolving Behavior Issues

For dog behavior issues, check out Your Dog's Friend (<https://yourdogsfriend.org>), which provides a wealth of information online, free workshops, and lists of suggested trainers. For cat behavior issues, check out this page (<https://www.catbehaviorassociates.com>), or find a feline behavior expert to help you (<http://iaabc.org/consultants> or www.animalbehaviorsociety.org/web/applied-behavior-caab-directory.php).

■ Help with Personal Crises Affecting Your Pets

If you're facing a personal crisis and need help for yourself and your pets, a number of resources are available:

- Domestic violence: Frederick-based Heartly House (301-662-8800) or the National Domestic Violence Hotline (800-799-7233, or www.thehotline.org).
- Other personal crises, such as homelessness, utility shutoff, substance abuse, or services needed by people with disabilities: dial 211 on your cell phone (or email info@211md.org or go to www.211md.org).
- Any crisis or difficult situation: Rescue Well (410-456-1392).

■ Careful Rehoming

If you cannot take your pet with you or if you're certain that she's not a good fit for your family, contact Rescue Well (www.rescuewell.org) for help safely rehoming your pet through their Well-Placed Pet program. Rescue Well will help you not only by marketing your pet online but by helping you screen potential adopters.

Why not simply post your pet online “free to a good home”? Without careful screening, your pet could end up with someone who is unprepared for your pet's medical or behavioral needs. When you rehome your pet, her future will be completely out of your hands; you won't have any control over how the new

owners treat her and you won't be able to stop them from rehoming her again or surrendering her to a shelter. Every time your pet has to start over, behavior issues could start or worsen.

Once your pet's online bio is posted through Rescue Well, share it widely using email, social media, nextdoor.com, or any other channel available to you.

Fear and Loss

We can also help pet owners understand why surrendering their pets to an open-admission animal shelter should be done only after exhausting other options.

For some animals, a shelter is a vast improvement over their former living conditions. Others thrive on the routine and structure in an animal shelter. But many animals are negatively affected by losing their families and by life in a shelter.

Dogs are highly social creatures who become strongly attached to their human families. At a shelter, they are surrounded by other dogs that they are rarely allowed to meet. People walk by their kennels every day, usually without stopping. Dogs probably look for their family members every day, but they never see them again. Cats have a strong attachment to their home; in a loud, unfamiliar environment, many are afraid. Fear and uncertainty are amplified by the sounds of barking dogs, by unfamiliar people handling them, by the clattering of cage doors and locks.

Animals can't tell us with words how they feel; they use body language and, when they deem necessary, when they can't run away, some use their teeth and claws. The combination of extreme anxiety or fear and an inability to communicate their feelings (to us) is what can turn a loving family pet into an animal that is too dangerous to handle. In some cases, if the animal doesn't seem to be adjusting and no rescue organization is able to take the animal, euthanasia may be the only option.

When All Else Fails

If you are not able to resolve problems or find a suitable new home for your pet in the time you have available, you should surrender him to the shelter. Be sure to provide as much information as you can about your pet's medical history and any behavior issues so staff have the best chance of finding him a happily ever after.