



The Cocker Home Companion

Cocker Spaniel Rescue of New England, Inc. (CSRNE, Inc.)

Vol. 51 Winter 2023

Since 1987, CSRNE has saved, improved and extended the lives of abandoned and neglected American Cocker Spaniels

Come Fly With Me

**“Smell the sea and feel the sky,
Let your soul and spirit fly.”**

- Van Morrison, songwriter

Imagine how mind-blowing it must have been for three puppy mill Cockers to make the freedom journey from their lives spent in cages on an Amish farm to flying among the clouds, winging their way toward a fresh start, to better futures with people eager to spoil them with love rather than folks who exploited them for financial gain. It would be marvelous to hear sisters Dora and Dancer, along with former stud Charlie tell us what their liberation felt like but it would be hard to hear, too, about the difficult years that came before.

Their journey began when Paulette Tamburro, Westmont, NJ, rescued the three dogs from an Amish puppy mill in Lancaster, PA. Tamburro has devoted 30 years of her life to animal rescue, first with rescue organizations and now as a free agent. She is an individual volunteer who visits as many as 40 different Amish farms around Lancaster, PA to pull dogs, horses, mules, and cows from sometimes deplorable and over-crowded conditions and lead them to safety. It's not uncommon for her, in a single day, to scoop up 20-40 dogs destined for animal auctions or marked for termination (not the costly, humane euthanasia type). “As many as we can get,” she says. She then reaches out to rescue organizations like CSRNE who find them homes.

Tamburro drove the three dogs from Pennsylvania to her home in New Jersey where they were checked out by a veterinarian before embarking on the second leg of their journey.

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Pilot Cody Mattiello flies Dora and Dancer from NJ to meet a CSRNE volunteer at the Manchester, NH airport



Dancer (left) and Dora

President's Message ❄️❄️❄️❄️❄️

This January, CSRNE will celebrate our 37th year as a rescue organization for abandoned, neglected and homeless cocker spaniels. We've experienced many challenges during these years. Perhaps the most stressful being actively participating in the closing of inhumane breeding operations, which includes rescuing all the cockers, providing veterinary care and rehoming these dogs who have lived most of their lives in crates in large, noisy facilities.

The sale of puppies on the internet spiked during the COVID pandemic when so many people were working from home and felt they could care for a pup. Many of these puppies were sold for astronomical prices, sight unseen by the buyer, and shipped to a nearby airport – not the best way for a prospective owner to assure they were buying a well-socialized and bred pup.

Once the demand for these “internet puppies” dropped off, breeders were left with too many dogs used exclusively for breeding.

Last spring, we started getting phone calls to “rescue” mostly female cockers who were no longer profitable and faced an unlikely future. Every call was an emergency – once a dog is no longer used for breeding they need a safe place immediately. None of the breeding dogs have any proof of vaccines (or any vet care whatsoever). They are usually dirty, matted and, of course, not spayed or neutered.

And here is where rescue groups like CSRNE face a big problem. The cost of veterinary care has skyrocketed in the past few years. We used to be able to spay or neuter a dog for between \$300 and \$400, now the range is \$600 - \$1000. Vaccines that were once from \$15 - \$22 are now double that amount and any testing has gone up at least 30% – 40%. Our vet bills now are typically \$400 - \$500 for in-office care, and many of our dogs require specialized care which can be in the thousands of dollars.

This significant increase in veterinary cost, coupled with not producing our Annual Joey Fund Auction for four years is a cause for much worry and stress.

We know this is a hard time for so many people. Your generous support in the past has made it possible for us to provide for the very best care to any cocker we rescue before placing them in safe, loving homes.

Your gift of any amount will make it possible for CSRNE to continue to fulfill our mission to save the lives of the abandoned and neglected dogs we rescue.

For all the dogs in need of help, thank you for your support.
Happy Holidays to you and your four-legged friends!
Gerry Foss, President



After vetting, grooming and a long trip to Mass., Charlie takes a nap in his new home

The Cocker Home Companion

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These cockers would love to find a Home for the Holidays! Can you help?



Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to CSRNE.

With your help, we provide food, veterinary care, and shelter to needy cockers. Your gift, regardless of size, makes a difference in the lives of dogs we rescue and to the people who foster and adopt them. We count on your support. ***Thank you.***

CSRNE is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

A Path To Resilience: Woodrow's Story

Keen intelligence and emotional sensitivity are two traits many Cocker lovers consider to be the breed's best qualities, and ten-year-old Woodrow ("Woods" to you and me) has them in spades. Unfortunately, he's been short on "resilience," a third quality that helps the other two work to great advantage. But certified Canine Behavior Specialist Renée Carol Mininni, ABCDT and founder of Renée Carol Dog Training, is helping him change that. This is Woodrow's story.

Woods has had four homes and is looking for his final and forever one. In his first home, little Woods was neglected and not taught key socialization skills that are typically acquired in the early stages of puppyhood. This may help to explain why such a sweet boy was uprooted the first time. Next, he was adopted by an elderly woman who was "his person," the center of his small world, and Woods did well. For several years, he enjoyed a peaceful if cloistered life with a loving companion, a reliable routine, and a quiet place to sleep and dream. All was good until she passed away and Woods went to live with her son's family. Once again, his whole world turned upside down and it seems to mark the beginning of his troubles.

The sudden move to an unfamiliar and noisy home, a lively household buzzing with activity, kids and another dog, was jarring for Woods. For a dog who had not been properly socialized and armed with useful skills for coping with a dynamic environment, this new living arrangement was a poor fit for the sheltered boy. Woods was overwhelmed - bombarded with stimulation - and reacted as if he was under constant threat. Although he was loved, his family was not equipped (or committed) to help him adapt.



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*Above: Woodrow "Woods" enjoying a quiet moment
Below: Woods with hiking companions,
Milo and Halo*



Path To Resilience... *from previous page*



Struggling to cope with his unease, Woods resorted to barking and nipping, attempts to guard against whatever made him anxious. Over time, his unproductive behaviors became habits that frayed his family relationship and resulted in Woodrow's surrender to CSRNE. For a third time, this little guy - now a senior - lost everything.

But what Woods didn't know at the time was that this setback was going to lead him to a bigger, richer life. It started when CSRNE introduced him to Renée Mininni.

Concerned that staying in a kennel would make matters worse for a dog who doesn't trust people, Renée welcomed Woods into her home and began a sort of "immersion therapy," teaching him how to act when people enter his personal space. Her approach has focused on force-free techniques, positive reinforcement to encourage better behavior, and support from her own dogs who model desirable canine conduct.

It's been a months-long process of helping Woods confront his habit of treating every person outside the safety of his home as a stranger, and even worse, a danger to avoid. Renée is using desensitization and counter-conditioning training techniques to get Woods back on track. Regular trail hikes with her several days a week have been a key component of his rehabilitation, building his resilience while giving Woods more exercise and mental stimulation that a sporting dog needs. Slightly disrupting his routine by varying the trails they take, hiking gives him an opportunity, under Renée's careful control, to practice being less reactive when passing fellow hikers.

It's been a slow process of desensitization as his anxiety threshold for greeting approaching people has whittled down from an initial range of 50 feet to its current 5 or so feet. Today, Woods



Woods, eager to hit the trail!

recognizes people on the trails and is non-confrontational, a huge achievement for him – and he loves being in the woods!

Woods has worked hard and has made great strides under Renée's expert tutelage. Thanks to her, he has developed skills he can rely on to navigate his increasingly wider world.

A well-behaved and very polite boy, says Renée, Woods likes to talk and clearly asks for what he needs, without being demanding. He's great with other dogs ("especially chill ones," notes Renée), thrives on structure, does better when slowly introduced to new situations, and favors a "no drama" environment where he is allowed to decompress. What is most important to Woods? The answer is easy, says Renée. "He needs 'his person,' a dog-savvy companion" with whom he can enjoy a close relationship and share his golden years in a stable forever home. He's earned it.

To learn more about Renée's training services, please go to www.reneecaroldogtraining.com.

Come Fly... from page 1

Next, Dora, Dancer and Charlie boarded separate flights piloted by Cody Mattiello and Mike Mayer. Each man holds a commercial pilot license and is affiliated with “Pilots N Paws,” a non-profit organization that serves as a communications clearing house to link requests for rescue flights with volunteer pilots available to fly. The service is free to the parties on both ends of a rescue operation.

Cody Mattiello flies his own 4-seat 1974 Piper Warrior aircraft. Asked why he joined the Pilots N Paws network, Mattiello says, “I’m always looking for reasons to go flying. I can work on logging my flight hours and do something good, too.”

He flew Dora and Dancer from Sky Acres airport in Lagrangeville, NY to Manchester, NH. The girls were slightly jittery first-time flyers but, adds Mattiello, “the hum of the engines helps dogs go to sleep.”

Mike Mayer flies a 6-seat Cessna 303 and transported Charlie from Pine Valley Airport in Berlin, NJ to Cape Cod Gateway Airport in Hyannis, Mass.— about a 90-minute flight.

Gusty winds reaching up to 25 knots posed a challenge for Mayer who wanted to provide a comfortable flight to companion Shaun Hogan and Charlie who he described as “a really friendly, pretty calm passenger who didn’t bark.” Mayer’s wife, Amy, often joins him on rescue flights but not on this early October jaunt to Cape Cod.

Dora, Dancer, and Charlie luckily “felt the sky” and are now looking for homes on the Cape where they will “smell the sea.” And best of all? Thanks to good samaritans Tamburro, Mattiello, and Mayer, and others who helped along the way, Dora, Dancer and Charlie have been given a chance to live freely so their souls and spirits can truly soar.



Charlie ready to board his flight to meet CSRNE volunteer Rick Hildebrandt



Pilot Mike Mayer (right) with passengers Shaun Hogan (left) and Charlie (center, in crate)

Sterling Public Market Benefits Rescued Cocker Spaniels

On Oct. 28, Cocker Spaniel Rescue of New England (CSRNE) hosted its inaugural Sterling Public Market at the First Church in Sterling, Mass., a free and fun event open to the public with all funds raised dedicated to the care of CSRNE's rescued dogs.

Longtime Sterling resident, events organizer and CSRNE volunteer Jane Morgan conceived of and hosted this year's first Sterling Street Market. When CSRNE's annual auction fundraiser was canceled, Morgan pivoted and launched the Sterling Public Market in its place. Thanks to huge community support, the Market was a hit!

The event was the most successful fundraiser that CSRNE, a 501c(3) charitable organization, has hosted since COVID emerged in 2020. Many businesses and artists donated items to sell, everything from artwork to jewelry, dog items, overnight stays at New England spots, restaurant gift certificates, museum passes and more.

Private donations and fundraisers are CSRNE's only sources of income so events like the Sterling Market play an indispensable role in the rescue's ability to operate. CSRNE volunteers sought item donations all year long, hoping the Market would raise at least as much money as CSRNE's annual "CockerPalooza" benefit has in past years.

Established in 1987, CSRNE is the oldest Cocker Spaniel rescue in New England and is celebrating 36 years of saving hundreds of canine lives and bringing joy to people, too, when they welcome these pets into their homes.

CSRNE's mission is to find forever companions for displaced Cocker Spaniels who come to them every year. In the spirit of a true rescue organization, CSRNE comes to the aid of dogs regardless of where they come from, how old they are, or whether they have existing health challenges. But this level of support is expensive to provide so CSRNE's fundraising efforts never take a holiday.

In many cases, dogs who find their way to CSRNE have not received regular preventive veterinary care so the non-profit shoulders the cost of bringing vaccinations up to date, financing surgical procedures that run the gamut from treating broken bones to spaying/neutering, and providing medications and diagnostic testing in addition to the usual fees to groom, feed, and house a pet until a forever home is found. Donations of any size make a significant difference in a dog's life and are greatly appreciated.



A Bundle of Silver Sweetness!

Silver, a 7-year old silver Labrador, was saved, along with a Cocker, from a Pennsylvania puppy mill just 24 hours from being shipped to auction – a miserable, inhumane event for unwanted puppy mill dogs. She is a 70-pound bundle of sweetness who enjoys long walks, travels well in a car (in the front passenger seat, if you please), and adores people. Silver is now enjoying lots of attention in her foster home. Her chronic bladder infection has cleared up and she is scheduled to be spayed soon! Silver is not yet ready for adoption but you can follow her progress by visiting www.csrne.org.





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Daisy says Happy Holidays!

Adopted by Vanda and John Moore



Cooper, Jasper and Asher celebrate the Holidays
in style!

Kendra Long photo

Seasons Greetings!



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and holiday decorations?**

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