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The Cocker Home Companion

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

Vol 33 Summer 2012

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

Celebrating 25 Years of
Saving American Cocker Spaniels

Our Heroes ~ Loving The "Unadoptable"

By Deb Gesimondo

For this special 25th anniversary edition of the Cocker Home Companion, Gerry Foss, President of Cocker Spaniel Rescue New England (CSRNE), pulled together all of the newsletters from 1994 to the present. In her words, looking over those newsletters was "a real trip down memory lane" – remembering not only the many sweet cockers CSRNE has rescued, but also the kind, devoted, compassionate people who have given so much of their time and love to help these needy cockers find a better life. They are the life blood of CSRNE. Without them, CSRNE could never have saved so many badly neglected dogs. So the focus of this 25th anniversary newsletter will be to tell the story of just a few of these folks and all their acts of kindness and generosity. This edition will be a celebration of these people and of the many friends who, through their volunteer efforts, adoptions, donations and auction attendance have made this 25th anniversary celebration possible. We are profoundly grateful for all that YOU do to support us!

Bev & Fritz Kagan

Bev and Fritz with PJ & Ranger

After she retired, Bev started volunteering at the Thomas J. O'Conner Animal Shelter (TJO) in Chicopee, MA. It was through her work at the shelter that she became aware of CSRNE. For fifteen years, Bev worked as a liaison between TJO and CSRNE. When a cocker spaniel came into the shelter, Bev assessed the dog's needs and worked with CSRNE to move the cocker out of the shelter environment as quickly as possible.

Bev's first rescue cocker was PJ. PJ came into the busy TJO shelter at a time when they were very over crowded. He was a cruelty case – infested with fleas, his skin and coat were in terrible condition and he couldn't walk. PJ had been hit by a car and it was three weeks before the Animal Control Officer found him and brought him to the shelter. Bev was very concerned about his condition and she called CSRNE immediately. CSRNE went into action and got PJ to an excellent orthopedic surgeon who confirmed that he had a fractured femur, a damaged knee and he would require surgery.

PJ would need to recover in a quiet, supportive environment - thank goodness, Bev volunteered to foster him. Of course, she fell in love with PJ's intelligence, his lovely temperament and his determination to walk again. Thanks to Bev's excellent post operative care, PJ recovered completely. By this time, PJ and Bev had formed a strong bond and lucky little PJ found his forever home with Bev and her husband, Fritz.

Not long afterwards, a little stray female cocker was brought to the TJO shelter. Sandy (as she was later named)

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was utterly terrified and cowered in the corner of her crate – she would not come out. Sandy tugged at Bev's heart strings and, with patience and a gentle, encouraging voice, Bev finally coaxed Sandy out of her crate. Bev knew that Sandy would need a lot of time and gentle handling before she would be ready to trust people again. Sandy went home with Bev – and stayed.

PJ & Ranger - It's good to have a friend!

Ranger was another example of a cocker who had probably been abused. He was especially terrified of kids on bicycles and would try to chase after them – a trait that made him difficult to adopt. During the time Ranger was being boarded by CSRNE, Bev visited him almost every day. She groomed him, took him for long walks and spent a lot of time reassuring him that he could trust people again. She also took him for short visits to her home in the hopes that Fritz would succumb to keeping yet another rescue cocker- and he did! As Bev says, she and Fritz "now belong to Ranger."

During the past 15 years, Bev, with the support and help of Fritz, has done it all. Not only does she foster (and often keeps) special needs rescue cockers but she travels to assess the personality and temperament of dogs waiting to be adopted. She also does home visits to ensure that the right cocker is matched with the right home "for the enduring happiness of both dog and new adopter."

In Bev's words, she wants to help CSRNE "for as long as I can." CSRNE is grateful to Bev and Fritz for their continued dedication and devotion to rescuing special needs cockers.

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Linda & Don Varnum

When talking with Linda and Don, it is immediately clear that they are a team. They are both passionate about cocker spaniels and dedicated to CSRNE and helping the dogs.

In the years working with CSRNE, they have been part of the Annual Joey Fund Auction Committee and online auctions, participated in the Yankee Barn Sale and flea market, manned tables at pet expos, and performed home visits. Don has even dressed up as Santa Claus for CSRNE! They have fostered several cockers but consider themselves foster "flunkies"! More often than not, they have adopted the cockers

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Linda and Don Varnum

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Attend our Cocker-Palooza at the Holiday Inn in Boxborough on Saturday, October 27, 2012 to Support the 15th Annual Joey Fund Auction

There are two special CSRNE anniversaries to celebrate this year! Not only is it the 25th anniversary of Cocker Spaniel Rescue of New England, we're also celebrating our 15th annual Joey Fund Auction.

For those of you who are new to CSRNE, the auction's proceeds benefit the Joey Fund which covers veterinary expenses for the dogs we rescue. Real-life Joey was an abandoned cocker who was found wandering the streets on a bitterly cold evening searching desperately for a friendly face. CSRNE found sweet Joey a forever home and paid for his considerable medical needs. In honor of this brave little cocker, the Joey Fund was created.

Over the years, our Joey Fund Auction has grown to encompass many activities. For those of you who have attended, you know that CSRNE pulls out all the stops to bring you a HUGE silent and live auction with many lovely gifts that appeal to everyone. From items for your precious pets to getaways, the auction has something for everyone's pocketbook.

But that's not all! We have a Cutest Pets Contest, great raffles, delicious baked goods, Arf Gallery and a "Pampered Pets" aisle where you can purchase gifts. In addition, you will meet Randy Price, Boston Channel 5's Morning News Anchor. There are activities to keep kids and adults amused all day long – come one – come all!

Freddie
2012 Joey Fund Poster Dog
"Come and meet me at the auction!"

To encompass all of these diverse – and fun - activities, we've decided to call our fundraiser "Cocker-Palooza". We love that name! Tell us what you think of it at the auction.

Want to join our devoted group of auction volunteers? We need donations! We look for hotel getaways, wine, liquor, jewelry, restaurant gift cards, vacation homes, theatre and museum tickets, pet items, golf outings, and more. Our hard working group welcomes new faces and ideas. Please email or call me if you can help – dhuegel@childrensfriend.org or 508-459-6443.

All the proceeds from Cocker-Palooza will help CSRNE save more dogs. It's our biggest fundraiser, and we depend on the money to help the cockers who so desperately need our services. Every year, millions of dogs enter shelters and, unfortunately, over 60% of those dogs are euthanized. We won't ever know the names of the dogs who were lost, but we do know the names of the ones we saved: Prissy who came to us heartworm positive; Jenna who spent six months alone in a dark basement with her six puppies; Cassie, Penny, Freckles, Murphy, Shannon … the list goes on. They are just some of the cockers that CSRNE has rescued and placed in forever homes. And let's not forget Moxie, Honey Bunz, Copper, Ingot, Mocha and the other cockers in CSRNE's long term care program, and of course, all the cockers helped through the Joey Fund.

Think about the benefits you get from CSRNE – perhaps you've adopted a cocker or two (or more!) and think about all the volunteer effort that goes into making the auction and CSRNE work. And when you do – remember to attend our Cocker-Palooza so that we can continue to help more abandoned cocker spaniels find loving and forever homes.

I'm looking forward to seeing you October 27th at the Holiday Inn, Boxborough, for a day of fun and fundraising to support CSRNE! Thank you for helping this wonderful organization to celebrate 25 years of rescuing homeless cocker spaniels.

Deb Huegel, Auction Chair

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Boo Boo - Living the Good Life

that they have been fostering. They most often adopt the "un-adoptable" – the senior cockers that are often overlooked but, as we all know, still have years of joy left to share with their adoptive parents.

Linda and Don came to cockers rather randomly. In 1982, Linda adopted a one year old cocker named Brahms and a one year old golden retriever, Brandy. Brahms grew into one of those extra special dogs – you know the ones. They seem to become an extension of you. They know what you're thinking before you do! And Brandy grew into the quintessential golden everyone raves about. All of Linda and Don's volunteer work with CSRNE and Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue is in memory of that special guy Brahms and that special girl Brandy.

Linda found CSRNE through an Internet search and decided to get involved. She and Don attended their first CSRNE Annual Joey Fund Auction in 2002. It was 6 ½ years after losing Brahms and they were taken by the bio of Holly, a 13 year old senior cocker, who was featured at one of the auction displays. There was something about that face that really got to Linda. After sensing that it was time, and in Brahms' memory, they adopted Holly.

And so they began opening their hearts and home to senior cockers in need. After Holly came Murphy, who had been treated for heartworm disease. Linda drove to Cape Cod to meet 13 year old Murphy and he jumped in the car seemingly saying, "I'm yours now!" and that was that! Next were 12 year old Fred and 11 year old Adam. And now it's 8 year old Boo Boo, yet another foster turned into adoption. Linda brought Boo Boo into the CSRNE program because he has severe allergies and the family he lived with could not care for him properly. Boo Boo is definitely a "daddy's boy" – he just loves Don.

Both Linda and Don know first hand the huge need that CSRNE helps address – too many homeless dogs, especially senior special needs cockers that need homes. And they continue to do whatever they can to help CSRNE. Of all of their volunteer efforts, they are most proud of the times that their home visits have turned into multiple dog adoptions. And that has happened on several occasions.

Sherry & Ralph Defeo

Sherry's Best Friends

The first thing you notice about Sherry is the way she signs her email: "Mom to many" and she's not exaggerating. When I called Sherry and asked if she had time to talk about her involvement with CSRNE she said, "Yes, the kids are quiet right now!" Sherry and husband Ralph are currently caring for eight CSRNE rescue cockers as well as their own dogs. We've often said that Sherry is the Best Friends Cocker Sanctuary of the east!

Providing sanctuary for dogs in need is what Sherry and Ralph do best. Sherry became involved with CSRNE in 2002 and over the past ten years many, many cockers have benefitted from her skill and devotion: Bliss who needed complicated ear surgery; Sonny and Frankie, two elderly devoted brothers who were found starving in the woods; Prissy and Buddy who were heartworm positive and needed special care during their treatment for this serious disease; Brandy who was almost hairless because of severe allergies - the list goes on and on. These are just a few of the many cockers who owe their lives to Sherry.

Some were lucky enough to be adopted; others lived out their lives at the Defeo Sanctuary. CSRNE paid for their veterinary expenses but Sherry and Ralph provided the priceless gift of love and care.

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A few years ago, Sherry was diagnosed with cancer and she says it was the dogs who kept her going; each morning she woke up feeling sick but she knew the dogs needed her. Sherry never missed a beat during this stressful time – caring for the dogs came first. It was a lesson in selflessness and devotion that will always be remembered by her CSRNE friends.

One of Sherry's greatest satisfactions is transforming cockers with behavior problems into happy, well- behaved dogs who can be adopted into "forever homes." Bailey is a shining example of Sherry's success.

Sherry worked with Bailey for four years. He is an intelligent, loving cocker with one major flaw – he steals things and will not let people take them back. He becomes an entirely different and aggressive dog when he is guarding his stolen item. However, the rest of the time he was a happy, amiable boy who loved to snuggle with Sherry.

Sherry believed that Bailey stole things to get her attention especially since there were so many other dogs also vying for her attention.

Ralph & Buddies
"Hey guys, dad's home!"

Bailey obviously needed a special adopter. Sherry felt he should be the only dog in a home where he would not have to compete for attention and where there were no other dogs who wanted his toys. He also needed an active owner who would give him lots of exercise – as we often say at CSRNE, "a tired dog is a good dog – an exhausted dog is a great dog!"

After four years of attending "cocker college" with Sherry and Ralph, Bailey was ready for a home of his very own. And as luck would have it the right home was waiting for Bailey. It was worth the wait.

Bailey's happy tale as told to his adoptive mom...

Bailey
"Mine! All mine!"

Hi everyone, it's me...Bailey.

It took me awhile to write because I've been so busy in my forever home. My new mom and dad have me so busy throughout the day that I can't wait to relax at night. I go for a walk with mom in the neighborhood almost daily and I run errands with her. I love riding in the car. I usually get to co-pilot in the passenger seat...wearing my seat belt of course! Then it's time for my daily brushing and playing in the yard before my new mom goes to work. She can bring me to work sometimes. She did the other day and that was cool! I was a BIG hit! And I got a lot of treats while I was there.

My new dad sleeps really soundly and I can get on the bed and snuggle right next to him. He doesn't even know I'm there until he wakes up in the morning. By then it's too late for him to do anything about it but give me lots of hugs!

Each week I pick out a new toy at the local pet store. The louder the squeaker the better, but it has to be a soft toy that squeaks. I even get to spend time at the lake! I chase my ball into the water and I just graduated to not wearing a life preserver. But my new mom and dad are always keeping an eye on me and don't let me go too far out. We go kayaking and boating - I wear a life preserver too. I'm getting a chance to meet lots of other people and their dogs. It's really neat!

I couldn't have done any of this without my foster mom and dad, Sherry and Ralph. I will never forget you! You are the reason I am where I am today. You loved me and cared for me when no one else could or would. You are my angels! I know my forever family really appreciate all you have done because they talk about it to each other ALOT! My ears perk up when I hear them on the phone asking you questions.

Well, I better go for now. I have to get a good night's sleep because tomorrow we're going for an early morning boat ride! I'll keep you posted on how I'm doing. Good night for now! Woof!

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Rocky & Sage-
A devoted, bonded pair, enjoying the view in their new home.
Adopted by Steven & Paula Jacunski

Help Celebrate CSRNE's 25th Anniversary!

Come to the 15th Annual Joey Fund Live and Silent Auction

Saturday, October 27, 2012 11am - 4pm

Holiday Inn, Boxborough, MA

See you there!

For more information, please visit www.csrne.org or call Jane at 508-868-9887