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The Cocker Home Companion

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

Vol. 40 Summer 2015

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

Buddy's first day home

Seeing the world through Buddy's eyes - one blue and one brown

The Distance of Love

Buddy's Story

Dear CSRNE:

We had to surrender our sweet Buddy to our vet at Guilford Animal Hospital due to severe aggression toward my husband. We tried for 11 long months to work with Buddy, with the help of a behaviorist and our vet. We could not put him down because we saw potential in him. Our vet did, too!

Thanks to you, Buddy was placed in a foster home with an experienced trainer where he got the kind of help he needed.

We found out Buddy was adopted and came across the video you posted. I was overcome with emotion. Sad, because we missed him. But mostly so happy that you were able to help him. I was so amazed at how far Buddy has come. Thank you so much for your organization. You have helped our family immensely.

Our family wanted to make sure you know just how much we loved Buddy and are so very happy he found a forever home. I have included some pictures of Buddy. The one with my son is the day we brought Buddy home.

Words cannot adequately convey our gratitude to your organization.

Sincerely,
Maggie
Branford, CT

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Bella, CSRNE's 2015 Joey Fund Poster Dog

Want To Help Us?

Donate. Adopt.
Foster. Volunteer.

To learn more about CSRNE,
visit www.csrne.org or call (603) 547-3363.
info@csrne.org
www.csrne.org
Stay connected with us!

Petfinder.com

President's Message

I am pleased to share the page with Bella, shown above, our 2015 Joey Fund Poster Dog. I hope you'll turn to page 5 and learn more about this delightful cocker.

As our Joey Fund Poster Dog, Bella represents all of the cockers in our care as she helps me encourage CSRNE supporters to donate to the Joey Fund. Regardless of size, your gift -- an act of kindness -- really does matter. Every contribution starts a ripple effect that touches so many: a dog who desperately needs expert medical attention, veterinarians and their colleagues who feel the relief and satisfaction that comes from alleviating a pet's pain and suffering, and animal lovers everywhere who hear a recipient's inspirational story and are uplifted by it, knowing that another rescued cocker has been helped on its way to a better life. Thank you.

I hope to see you in Boxborough on **Sunday, October 11,** for Cocker-Palooza! CSRNE's 18th annual Joey Fund Auction. We promise to wrap up well before the Patriots take to the field for an exciting game against the Dallas Cowboys!

Sincerely,
Gerry Foss
President, CSRNE

CSRNE is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible. We rely solely on the generosity of our supporters and volunteers to help cockers in need. Thank you!

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Edit and Design
Cyndy Bremer
Polly Marmaduke
Logo Design
Susan Tasillo, D.V.M.

CSRNE, Inc.
Officers and Board
President
Gerry Foss
VP/Secretary
Linda Simoneau
Jane Morgan
JoAnn Hall
Hartley Scribner
Joyce Kelbaugh
Bookkeeper
Jennie Harris
Consultant
Joyce Tilton
webmaster@csrne.org
Gordon LaGrow
Web Consultant
Joyce Kelbaugh

Donations and Information:
CSRNE, Inc.
P.O. Box 162
Greenfield, NH 03047
Tel: 603-547-3363
www.csrne.org

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The Distance of Love… *from page 1*

For Maggie and her family, there was no alternative but to let Buddy go. They tried for nearly a year to eliminate Buddy's aggressive behavior, but the situation deteriorated. So with the invaluable support of their veterinarian, Dr. Morna Pixton of Connecticut's Guilford Animal Hospital, Maggie's family made the wrenching decision to surrender him. Dr. Pixton was direct with them: if Buddy continued to be a danger, she could not guarantee his future. The family left the clinic, not knowing if they had started Buddy down a path to his demise but trusting their veterinarian to do everything in her power to save him.

Let's be clear: this family adored Buddy and treated him very well. There was no taunting, no abuse. They intended to care for him his entire life, but they were not equipped to deal with his threatening behavior. Explains Dr. Pixton, "Buddy was a handful from the very beginning. This was his personality from the get-go. He was nippy, growling, and exhibited overt aggression. Buddy was possessive and intensely bonded to Mom."

Maggie struggles with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and periodically experiences painful flashbacks. Perhaps assuming the role of Maggie's "protector" was more than Buddy could do.

Once Buddy was removed from Maggie's home, he quickly settled down. Dr. Pixton describes him as "completely sweet and docile" with her. A shift in Buddy's attitude was a good first step and an encouraging sign, but Dr. Pixton knew that more was required before placing him in an adoptive home.

As word of Buddy's plight spread, the local Guilford community joined the effort to help turn his life around. A leading dog trainer contacted Gerry Foss, CSRNE's President, who immediately reached out to Karen Branson. This is not the first time CSRNE has sought Karen's help. She has earned a reputation for transforming dogs with severe behavior issues. Karen accepted the challenge, took Buddy into her home on a foster basis, and began his training.

Under Karen Branson's steady hand and strict

Buddy with Maggie

adherence to providing "structure, structure, structure," Buddy learned new ways of relating to people. This summer, when Karen determined that he was ready, Buddy was placed in an adoptive home. Larry and Barbara Kingsbury have raised cockers and are committed to Buddy's ongoing training.

Hardly more than a year old, Buddy has traveled the distance, down a tough road, but he is fortunate to have been loved and supported by many people along the way. Says adoptive dad Larry Kingsbury, "Buddy is very social. He loves people, very much, and anything that flies – birds, insects, and butterflies! We love him and are so glad he's with us." Buddy is enjoying his new life in New Hampshire with the Kingsburys.

Maggie's family is doing well, too. They have recently rescued a severely abused black lab named "Bella" whose docile personality is a better fit for them. As hard as it was, they know that surrendering Buddy was in his best interests as well as their own. Although his path has not been what they imagined when they brought their tiny puppy home from the pet store, their dreams for him have been fulfilled: he is a trusted family member in a home where he is treasured and happy.

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Dr. Larry Venezia with CSRNE cocker, Gracie

House Call with Dr. Larry Venezia

Promoting Cocker Ear Health

Meet Dr. Lawrence (Larry) Venezia. A 1976 graduate of Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Venezia has devoted close to 40 years caring for pets and their people. But you have to reach back further into his past to find the start of his affection for cocker spaniels.

When Dr. Venezia was a 19-year-old veterinary student, he paid a breeder $500 for a show dog - a cocker named "Missy." He laughs as he admits, "It was a lot of money to spend, but it shows how badly I wanted her!"

Missy remained his "special little dog" until she passed away at age 15. Today, her life-sized portrait is featured in the reception area of the Hyannis Animal Hospital where Dr. Venezia practices.

For many years he bred cockers, keeping a few to raise as his own. His last cocker died about three years ago. Talk to him about living with cocker spaniels and the conversation quickly shifts to the breed's chronic ear infections.

First, some background information. Canine ear canals are structurally different from human ear canals. In humans, the ear canal is short, straight and runs directly to the skull. In dogs, the ear canal is parallel to the face then takes a sharp angled turn toward the skull. As a result, it is difficult for water, debris, and bacteria caught in the canal to work its way out.

Compounding the situation for cockers are their drop ears that are long and low set, covering their ear canals and trapping bacteria in a warm, dark environment. But that's not all.

"An ear culture that only checks the outer ear is a total waste of money. If you can culture the middle ear, that's useful."

- Dr. Larry Venezia

What many pet owners, and even some vets, do not know is that there is a reason cockers have more ear infections than other dogs. Says Dr. Venezia, "Cockers are unique and must be treated that way."

"An ear culture that only checks the outer ear is a total waste of money. If you can culture the middle ear, that's useful, " Dr. Venezia points out.

He continues, "The outer ear canal is very contaminated with a variety of yeast and bacteria. Cockers are distinct. When they develop 'otitis' or an ear inflammation, most times the epithelial lining of the middle ear produces a ceruminous material which promotes 'otitis media' that progresses to a chronic ear canal hypertrophy [enlargement of the tissue]. Unless you control the inflammation with oral medications, you'll continue to have problems. Treat the infection and then you must stay on top of it with an ongoing maintenance program."

Dr. Venezia emphasizes, "It's important to have a good working relationship with your pet's veterinarian. Treat this as a management condition that you work on together."

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Meet Sweet Bella!

CSRNE's 2015 Joey Fund Poster Dog

CSRNE is pleased to announce that Isabella, aka "Bella," has been named our 2015 Joey Fund Poster Dog. This is no honorific title for Bella. She earned it.

Quiet and low key, petite Bella is a 7 year old chocolate cocker. Thanks to supporters of CSRNE's Joey Fund, Bella was able to have major abdominal surgery to remove five bladder stones. Massachusetts veterinarian Dr. Lynne O'Neil, of the Townsend Veterinary Hospital, performed the surgery. A growth on Bella's tongue - a birth defect - was also removed.

Foster mom Mary Letourneau says Bella came through the experience "like it never happened." Mary, an Animal Control Officer in Townsend, is caring for Bella while CSRNE searches for Bella's forever home. She describes Bella as "a moosh," "a sweetheart," and "one of the

absolutely nicest cockers I have ever known." Sadly, Bella was surrendered to CSRNE when her owner lost her home.

It's been a tough year for Bella, but she is resilient. Let's help her end 2015 on a high note by finding her a wonderful family to love. And for the coming year, Bella will work on behalf of other cockers to "pay it forward" by encouraging CSRNE supporters to give generously to the Joey Fund. Your gift, regardless of size, really does matter.

Tips for Promoting Cocker Ear Health

What indicates a problem?
- Be observant of changes in your pet's behavior such as scratching an ear or shaking the head.
- Redness or swelling of the outer ear.
- A bad odor, perhaps "yeasty" smelling.

Don't wait to act
- If possible, begin flushing the ear with a vet-approved cleaning solution.
- Contact your vet immediately so an infection can be properly diagnosed. Ask if the exam includes a check of the middle ear.
- Treat an infection early and completely.

How do I keep the ear canal healthy?
- Trim fur from the ear opening so air can circulate.
- Regularly examine your pet's ears and clean the ear canals to keep them open, clear, and dry.
- Practice preventive care with periodic vet visits.

When chronic ear infections are left unmanaged, cockers may lose their hearing or suffer severe pain and irreversible damage which requires major surgery to remove the ear canals in a procedure called "Total Ear Canal Ablation."

"An effective regimen could prevent at least 50% of cases that end up requiring an ear ablation," Dr. Lawrence Venezia says.

Sadly, many cockers enter the animal rescue system because an owner is discouraged with a constantly scratching pet or cannot afford the cost of a chronic health issue.

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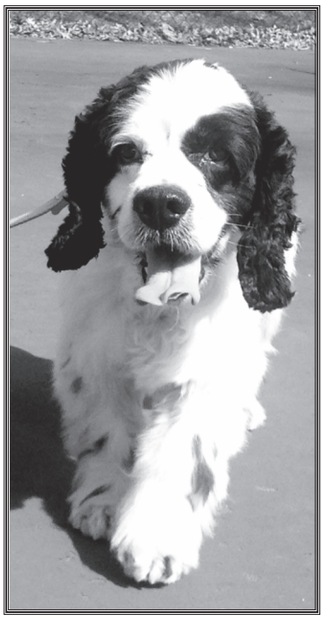

Harley

Visit www.csrne.org to meet Harley and other available cockers

Calling All Patriots Fans!

Join Special Guest Randy Price for a fun time to benefit a wonderful cause. Our friends, the New England Patriots, have contributed these keepsake treasures to our exciting selection of auction items:

- **Game shirt autographed by fan favorite Julian Edelman**

- **Signed copy of Rob "Gronk" Gronkowski's new book, "It's Good To Be Gronk"**

We promise to finish before kick-off!