



Kennel Connection

See Page 3 For Adoptable Pets Available Now!

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Newsletter of Frederick County Animal Control & Pet Adoption Center

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by Abby H. Carson

I always like the stories where people and pets come together and the lives of both are made better. That's why I'm sharing my story of Millie, my English mastiff from the Frederick shelter.

This story began when I decided that I wanted a dog. There were many reasons for my desire: a near empty house since the kids left for college; a feeling of unease in the house when I was alone, especially with all the craziness in the world; a need for simple companionship during those too quiet times my spouse wasn't around. Basically, I've never done well being alone

My son, who has always loved dogs, was visiting from school last March. After hearing my interest in canine companionship, he basically dragged me and my hubby to the shelter. We visited with a few dogs over the next couple of days and wound up settling on Millie.

I'm not sure why we picked her, as my husband had wanted a smaller dog that would be easier to travel with, and my son wanted a playful pup with unbounded energy. Millie was neither of these. She was only a year old, but she had an old soul with a big body attached. And she had big, sweet eyes in a sad face that seemed to say "don't hurt me, and I promise I won't be too much trouble."

In the months since, we've found

that she actually isn't any trouble at all. She's a big sweetheart. With just a little love and kindness, she's blossomed. She's not the guard dog I thought I wanted and needed, but she more than makes up for her skittishness with a love and devotion that can't be measured. She's become my constant companion, loving to always be within sight or sound of me. She's also a quiet girl who's barked only once since we adopted her, and this was at a firefighter dressed in full gear—I guess she didn't know what to make of him. She's good with other people and with other dogs, and enjoys a good romp at the dog park. She will come and hide behind us if other dogs get too playful, as Millie's into more subdued fun, more into meeting and greeting as opposed to roughhousing.

We've struggled a bit with her diet, as she seems to have a very sensitive system. But I was fortunately equipped for that, being a nurse certified in nutrition and with a chef's certificate to boot. So she made me feel needed as I put together her special diet over the course of a few months. I cook for her almost every day, and am rewarded by her love of the food (she basically eats like a starved wolf)—and even more so by her improved health and weight.

She's sitting on the couch beside me now, snuggled up and comfy. I can't imagine not having her in my life. We weren't looking for each other, but we wound up being a perfect match.

Kitten Season Segue

Take a walk through the cat room at the Frederick shelter and you may find yourself drawn to the kittens tumbling around in their cages or sprawled out in impossibly cute sleeping positions. During "kitten season," it's hard for an adult cat to be noticed amid all those tiny paws and winsome meows. But on July 16th, 2016, after 4 months in the shelter, 3-year-old Black Olive found her way into the hearts of the Quintanilla family.

When they arrived at the shelter, recalls Samantha Quintanilla, "it was very hard to decide which cat we liked. I went with my mother and my brother, and we all ended up liking different cats." Though the kittens were tempting, the family was more comfortable with adult cats, and they knew that adult cats are often overlooked by adopters. "I know that kittens will have no problem finding a home," says Samantha.



"But all animals deserve to have a home, no matter their age."

When they found Black Olive, her personality won them over. What sealed the deal was finding out how long the black domestic short-hair had been waiting. She "had been at the shelter for a long time, and that was one factor that swayed our decision," explains Samantha. "We wanted her to be part of our family."

When they brought her home, the Quintanillas left Black Olive—whom they renamed Cleo—in her carrier for a few minutes to allow their other cat, 22-year-old Muchachita, to sniff her. Cleo's previous family had claimed that she was not using her litterbox—something we did not observe at the shelter. So the next step was to introduce Cleo to the room where she would spend her first few days, her food and water dishes, and her litter box.

For her first two days home, Cleo was shy. "Every time I came into the room she was in," says Samantha, "she would run away and hide. I noticed she felt more comfortable at night, and she would come sit on my lap while I was in there using my computer."

Over time, Cleo came out of her shell. Now, says Samantha, "she's definitely used to us and the house. Every night when I go to my room to get ready for sleep, she will follow me into my room and sleep there." During the day, Cleo enjoys sitting at the window



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Director's Letter: Defining Commitment

by Linda Shea

People interested in adopting from an animal shelter or rescue organization often envision the best possible scenario. They expect their adopted pet to immediately become a loyal companion to its new forever family. The sad, forlorn appearance from behind a chain link run or stainless steel cage bars will transform into a content, appreciative expression once the animal realizes she has a family of her own. Social media posts and fundraising advertisements from national animal welfare organizations confirm those ideals with real-life examples promoting happy endings complete with fireplace backgrounds, overstuffed pet beds, and adoring children. What some of the popular messaging lacks is the level of commitment required to create those happily forever afters.

Between July and October this year, 26 animals adopted from our shelter were returned. Some adoptions, like that of senior Siamese kitties Loni and Tobi, occurred several years ago; they were returned to us (and have since been placed with a rescue organization) because their owner's health declined. Other returns cause us to shake our heads and reevaluate where we missed the red flags—like the energetic Lab returned because he needed too much attention; the husky puppy who was too much responsibility; and the 4-month-old kitten whose owners were unable to take him along when they moved.

Although nobody can predict with certainty whether an animal is a good match for a particular family, we have found one common denominator that can prevent failure: commitment. Commitment, when it comes to incorporating a pet into a family, includes being realistic about your tolerance for chewed up slippers, clawed furniture, and sleep deprivation. Shelter staff and volunteers share with adopters the reality of an animal's personality, history, medical record, and behavior needs. Our animals depend on committed adopters to create the happy endings they deserve.

■ Linda Shea is Director, Frederick County Animal Control.

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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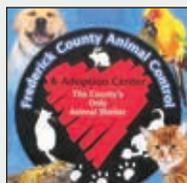
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Talk to Us: News from the CAWAC

by Doree Lynn Miles

The mission of the Companion Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (CAWAC) is to ensure that County programs and policies adequately address the welfare of companion animals. For the last several years, CAWAC has met at least once each quarter. However, interest in the Committee has waned and membership has dropped significantly, prompting CAWAC to consider dissolution of the Committee. We feel that the reduced need for CAWAC is actually an encouraging sign, possibly reflecting the community's increased awareness of Frederick County Animal Control (FCAC) and the positive difference FCAC is making in the lives of homeless animals every day.

The next CAWAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 12, 7:00 p.m., at FCAC, 1832 Rosemont Avenue. At this meeting, we will continue discussions regarding the dissolution of the Committee and will call for a formal vote. Should the volunteer members vote to dissolve the Committee, they will have ample opportunity to turn their time and attention to other projects that will continue to benefit the shelter.

For example, Frederick Friends of Our County Animal Shelter (FFOCAS, a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit) has made terrific strides toward fundraising for the shelter as well as promoting awareness of local animal welfare concerns through social media and events. CAWAC is prohibited from fundraising due to its status as a County entity. If CAWAC is dissolved, our members would have more time to serve as volunteers or foster care providers for FCAC. Members would also be free to volunteer with FFOCAS, lending time and expertise to much needed fundraising efforts, or to contribute to FFOCAS-FCAC initiatives, such as a project to facilitate the uniform collection and analysis of shelter data and shelter animal outcomes over time.

All CAWAC meetings are open to the public and we encourage citizens to attend. For more information, please contact us via email: cawac.info@gmail.com.

■ Doree Lynn Miles is chair of CAWAC and proud momma to FCAC alumni, Chloe and Guinness.

CLEO

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or on the deck, watching the birds and squirrels. She seems to feel especially comfortable around Samantha and her brother.

The relationship between Cleo and Muchachita is, says Samantha, "still evolving." The two cats eventually stopped hissing at each other and now will remain in the same room together without a fuss. "I am very happy that they are getting along better," says Samantha. "I know it's a shock to Muchachita ... she got used to being alone for two

years [after our other cats passed away]. But I am not worried. Cleo is making progress and she is more comfortable than at the beginning."

Cleo may have shunned her litter box in her previous home—a fairly common issue that can almost always be resolved with a little detective work and patience to figure out the cause—but in her forever home with the Quintanillas, she has shown no signs of such a problem. Why she had litterbox issues in her previous home is anyone's guess. "In the end," says Samantha, "I am happy because she found her way to our family, and she is already much loved."

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!



NALA AND JASON

Nala and Jason are the warm, generous couple whose schmoope love for each other makes you smile. Gaining their trust takes time, but is so worth it! They are your moral compass, your constant reminders of steadfast love—for each other and for you.



DOVE

Dove is your friend through thick and thin. She's a world-class listener with the finest purr motor around. In exchange for your love and care, your promise of forever, and some ear scratches, this beautiful former stray will gladly give you the unconditional love you need.



JIMMY

Jimmy is the rambunctious teenage boy who's intent on having fun and absorbing all the attention he can. But at the end of the day this sweetie, who's been around kids and other cats, just wants a snuggle with his special person.



MARLOW

Marlow is a rabbit about town: active and social, up on all the gossip, ready for adventure. He'll be there when you get home, happy to see you and ready to play with gentle adults and kids.



BRICKLE

Brickle is gentle and outgoing, energetic and playful, he is the devoted, unwavering best friend. Your own personal sunshine on the dreariest day, your motivation to live life to the fullest, your confidante and your exercise buddy. All he asks in return is forever.



BABY

Baby is the hidden gem. The kind, demure soul who is so undemanding, you might not even notice the light in her eyes, the surprising sense of humor she so wants to show you. Once broken, her heart is whole again, and she longs to give all of it to her own special family.

by Samantha Pack-Witmer

Brutus was approximately 8 years old when we adopted him from Frederick County Animal Control. His previous family had him for 5 years, but could not take him with them when they moved.

While in the care of the shelter, Brutus had a large benign tumor removed from his mouth. He had two additional tumors on his side, but bloodwork and X-rays showed that he was overall in good health. Although he was sweet and full of spirit, Brutus was overlooked by adopters for a month because of his medical history and age. He just needed to be given a chance.

It was during this time that I convinced my husband to consider looking at dogs. Before we got out of the car, my husband said, "If they have a dog named Brutus and I like him, he's ours." Sure enough, there was Brutus. We met him and fell in love. It didn't matter what his history was, or his age; we applied to adopt him right then.



We brought Brutus home on June 15th. He was a total sweetheart who fit right into our family. He loved to hang out on the recliner and play games like tug-of-war. Mostly he enjoyed snuggling with all his loved ones. He was always happy.

When Brutus started showing signs of a health problem—vomiting, weakness, and con-

fusion—we brought him to the vet. Unfortunately, the doctor found an invasive tumor on his right adrenal gland, pressing against a major blood vessel. Surgery was unlikely to be successful because of the location of the tumor.

Brutus had been part of our family for less than 2 months at this point. Although we wanted to have more time with him, we knew we couldn't let him suffer any longer. We had to say goodbye.

I'm sharing this story because we often become judgmental and selfish in life. Anyone might hesitate to adopt a senior pet, especially one with a previous medical history that sounds concerning. But we need to take a moment to remember that lives matter, and everyone deserves love and respect. Everyone should be able to spend their final days knowing they are important and loved.

Adopting Brutus was the best decision we've made; he changed our lives forever. We are so thankful that we were able to give Brutus a family, love, and a peaceful ending.



Need a Hand?

Recently, a Frederick County family facing serious medical and financial difficulties chose to live in a tent for months rather than give up their pets. Area homeless shelters don't allow pets, and this family was not able to find affordable, pet-friendly rental housing. What they have given up to stay with their pets is humbling and inspiring—their pets truly are family!

For many families, though, temporary—sometimes sudden—hardships are so overwhelming that they do give up their pets. This is stressful and upsetting, both for the humans and for the pets.

Staff and volunteers at Frederick County Animal Control (FCAC) do all we can to find a loving home or a rescue organization for every animal surrendered to us. However, some of these pets arrive with serious behavioral issues or medical conditions, which can be worsened by the stressful shelter environment. Because of our limited resources, euthanasia sometimes is the only option.

If you know someone who's struggling to keep their pets, please tell them that help may be available. Here are some resources to explore.

Pet Food Banks

FCAC (the county animal shelter): 301-600-1546, animalcontrol@frederickcountymd.gov (to use the food bank, all pets must be spayed/neutered, vaccinated against rabies, and licensed with the County)

Frederick County Humane Society (FCHS, a local nonprofit organization): <http://www.fchs.org/programs/services.html>, info@fchs.org, 301-694-8300

Animal Welfare League of Frederick County (AWLFC, a local nonprofit organization): http://www.awlfc.org/pet_food_bank.php, info@awlfc.org, 301-663-5855

Assistance with Vet Bills

AWLFC offers assistance with veterinary care: http://www.awlfc.org/financial_assistance.php, info@awlfc.org, 301-663-5855

FCHS offers several programs to assist with veterinary care: <http://www.fchs.org/programs/programs.html>, info@fchs.org, 301-694-8300

If AWLFC and FCHS programs don't meet your needs, check out this list of national and regional organizations that may be able to help: <http://yourdogsfriend.org/we-recommend/need-help-paying-vet-bills/>

Pet-Friendly Rental Home Listings

FCHS maintains a list of pet-friendly rental

properties within Frederick County and provides links to websites where you can search for pet-friendly housing elsewhere: <http://www.fchs.org/resources/apartments.html>, info@fchs.org, 301-694-8300

Help for Military Service Members

FCHS runs the Wolfe Military Assistance program for active-duty and recently separated military families needing pet-related assistance of various types: <http://www.fchs.org/programs/programs.html>, info@fchs.org, 301-694-8300

We know of two organizations that try to connect military service members with volunteers who provide long-term, in-home foster care/boarding for your pet:

Dogs on Deployment (for all types of pets, not just dogs!): <https://www.dogsondeployment.org/>

PACT: <https://pactforanimals.org/pacts-work/military-foster-program/>

Help Resolving Dog Behavior Issues

Your Dog's Friend offers free workshops in Montgomery County, posts helpful articles on all kinds of behavior issues, and provides a list of recommended trainers and behaviorists throughout MD/VA/DC (including Frederick): <http://yourdogsfriend.org/>, 301-983-5913.

Don't just assume that you can't afford to get help from a professional dog trainer—check the price ... it might not be as expensive as you think, and could save you so much heartache!