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THE DECISION: LIFE AFTER DOG

Do I or Don't I get another dog once mine is gone? BY JODI MARCUS

When your dog dies it feels as though you were struck by a blow to your heart. This happens even if you know it is coming, because your dog has gotten older and more feeble daily. Or if you have your dog euthanized to prevent him from living in pain, you, yourself, suffer this overwhelming pain of loss. Yes, I know that pain as do many of you. Sometimes people let that pain rule them and decide it is not something they ever want to experience again; it wipes out all the happiness and companionship this particular pet brought and they swear they will never again let themselves experience it. We all need to grieve for our lost pets in our individual ways. Some people cannot stand a house without having a companion dog and soon acquire a new one. Others are just not ready right away, but in time realize how much they miss their canine or feline companion and open their lives again. Others swear off pets forever, because the loss is just too much. The first loss we experienced with Akitas was our girl Sassy. She had been a pet store puppy, 29 lbs at 4 months and so weak she could not even walk up the three stairs to the front porch. She had so many of the emotional and mental problems of a puppy-mill produced dog. I called Puller and Betty often, wanting to tear my hair out in dealing with her issues. It is so true that the dogs who cause you the most trouble and which require the most work are the ones you end up loving more fiercely. She grew older and improved tremendously with age. At five, she was a wonderful companion. And at six, she bloated and did not survive. I was inconsolable. How unfair that after all the storms we had been through together, that we could not long enjoy the sunshine that followed? Luckily for us, we had other Akitas and cats all of whom needed daily care. I had no choice but to keep on with everyday activities with them. For someone whose sole companion is their dog, the loss has to be devastating, the house empty and the idea of getting another dog and facing that same loss again in the future is not something they can see their way to doing. I have spoken with many of you through the years, you owners whose dog was their only family. I want to talk to you again now. Your pet brought you such joy and companionship that their lives became tightly interwoven with yours. It seems as if life unravels completely when they are gone. No other dog will be the same. But another dog can add a different thread to the tapestry of your life. Another dog will have his or her own personality quirks that endear, will bring that same unconditional love in its own way, will entwine its life with yours and add color and more joy in its own unique way. I have to admit that I do not understand why anyone would deprive themselves of having more love and joy in their lives. Doesn't the sum of their lives outweigh the pain of parting? Doesn't what they gave during their lives mean more than the loss when that life is over? I am not saying you are not hurting, I am saying don't let that pain rule your life forever. The reason I am writing this is the result of my own pain. I am writing this because every time a shelter contacts rescue, every email that comes complete with a picture of a lovely Akita in a shelter, many of whom resemble my beloved dogs past and present, and I have to say "No room", I hurt. I cry over the those dogs that I know will be euthanized. What if that were your dog? Wouldn't you want someone to step forward and say "I can foster this dog" or "I can give this dog a home"? Many of you who adopted from us would not have even had that wonderful presence in your lives if someone had not stepped forward and volunteered to foster. I know I cannot help them all, but we could help more if some of you are willing to open your bruised hearts and take the chance of letting another dog into your life. And if you cannot see your way to owning another, maybe you could foster one until their forever home comes along. What better tribute can you give to your old dog, what better legacy than to save another dog's life? Please think about this, push past that pain, and help an Akita whose very life may depend upon your decision.

URGENT:

FOSTER HOMES

NEEDED!!!

Ever thought of
fostering?

Maybe in the future?

If you can find it in
your heart, we urge
you to complete the

paperwork now.

Please visit our
website for more

information:

AkitaRescue.org

MALACHAI: LUCKY DOG

BY JODI MARCUS

Hi, my name is Malachai. I was taken by Animal Control when I and my "male shepherd mix" companion were running around together. We were put in separate areas and had a hard time communicating, but it was cool. Our family would come get us like they did before. Except this time, they didn't. HELLO !!! FAMILY????!!!! Where are you? The people here are good to us; we are fed, have water, get some exercise, but some very disquieting things happen here. Here is the worst: dogs are there one day and the next they are gone. No families came to get them (like ours has not come to get us). The humans here say sadly that "their time was up". What does that mean? I checked myself all over and could not find an expiration date anywhere and don't recall seeing one on any dog I have met. So

how could "their time be up"? I was becoming more and more concerned the longer I was there. The AC officer told me that my family had decided not to come and get us. They were not going to pay the cost to get us out: a fine for us running at large and boarding fees. What do they expect when they leave intact dogs outside who are completely bored and whoa! smell a female in heat? Of course we took off, what male wouldn't? Besides, it is much more interesting to run around and check things out than stay tied in one place. Maybe inside the house would have been interesting, too. But we never found out. So, I began to think I was in more trouble than before. Then one of the shelter workers came by and told me I was a "lucky dog". The local Akita rescue (huh?) had room. They had been contacted and one dog had just left so there was an open space. Okay this is a good thing, right? A few days later a lady and man came in. They smelled really interesting; lots of dogs, and CATS (Oh Boy! Now there's some fun!).

The shelter worker took me out, we went into a room and the new people put food down in front of me. I ate of course, but they kept stroking me with this hand, pushing my face away from the food, taking the bowl away. Okay ... I get it now that they were testing me, but how annoying is that? I passed the test and they took me outside to the exercise area. THANK YOU, GOD !! I used the facilities several times in several ways and felt much better !! I hated going in my living space. She called me over, and felt my paws, my ears, looked at my teeth, checked me out all over. I mean ALL OVER...really, we don't know each other that well !!! She was polite about it and I just let her do it if that is what it takes to get my butt out of here...and the rest of me, too !!!! They took me with them !! Whew...I was beginning to think that my "time would be up" soon and did not want to find out what that meant. At the end of the ride, we went into a house and yup, other dogs, but all of them were Akitas, like me. I was put into a crate...not sure I like this, but I like being inside. There were also cats...nice but a piece of work.



The other dogs were polite and introduced themselves and told me all would be well as long as I remembered to listen to the lady. They said as long as she was happy, everyone was happy and they wanted to keep it that way. That meant leaving the cats alone, which was made very clear to me. Alrighty, I would keep that in mind. Both she and the man walked me, gave me a bath, took me to the vet, and I got into the daily routine. She told me my stay with her was only temporary and I would be going somewhere else to be "fostered" whatever that means. Not too long afterward, they took me to another house, where I was crated again and met a female Akita named EV, who is really nice but a pill. I was "neutered" and guys, let's not go there. You really don't want to know. After I recovered, I met EV face to face and we got along very well. Aaron, my foster dad, is taking me to obedience class. There were two other

Akitas there who were also rescue dogs, Bertie and Sam. Sam is Bertie's dad. How cool is that to be able to see your canine family? We get along pretty well. Most people are amazed that three male Akitas are so good together. Well, look at the alternative dogs there: Boston Terriers, labs, boxer, a shaggy mix of some kind. Really, given the choice of them or other Akitas, there is no choice. Besides, Bertie and Sam are pretty cool guys and pretty laid back. I should soon earn my CGC (Canine Good Citizen) award. The lady who originally took me out of the shelter said it would enhance my adoptability and she plans to do it with all rescue dogs. Adoptability? Another home to get used to? But I have been assured that the next place I go will be the last place, my forever home. I can deal with that.

Not too long ago, I was one of the Akitas at the Pet Expo, along with Sam and another of his sons, Raiden. He is just as easy going as Sam and Bertie. We all hung out at the booth, got lots of attention and belly rubs...that Sam, he

is a champion belly rub beast! Again all were amazed at how well we got along in this small area. The rescue volunteers could not say enough nice things about us, nor could our audience. Always good to hear praise...and belly rubs, don't forget belly rubs.

So, now you know my story. I am described as being exceptionally laid back even among Akitas and especially for my age (under 2 years, but over 1 year). I get along with most large dogs, am very easy going, friendly but self contained, housebroken, crate trained, and healthy. I however just don't care for small dogs generally, but small, white, fluffy ones in particular. I am also predatory toward cats. I have been assured that I will not be placed in a home with anything remotely resembling them. I ride well in a car, and soon will be considered officially well schooled in manners once I get my CGC, and do not doubt that I will. I am looking for a family with older children who have no cats or small dogs and who want a guy who can fit into any lifestyle. If you are that family and want to hook up, call rescue and let them know. I'll be happy to make your acquaint-

BLOAT 101: STAY INFORMED

I think it is a good idea to revisit information on bloat, its symptoms and what to do when your dog bloats. Here is the short version of bloat. For whatever reason, a dog's stomach fills with air, fluid, foam or food (yes, we had one eat over 10 lbs of dry dog food which then expanded). The stomach twists, cutting off its blood supply. Stomach tissue starts dying. If discovered in sufficient time before the twist or torsion occurs, the stomach can be deflated by a tube down the throat to release air. Once deflated and having had time to recover, the dog should undergo surgery to "tack" its stomach so it will not twist again; once a dog bloats, it is not uncommon for it to happen again. Tacking does not prevent future bloats, but will prevent torsion. It will not prevent death from future bloats. It will give you a little added time to get your dog to the vet and have them deflated. If the stomach has already torsed, immediate surgery is necessary to save the dog's life. Post surgery is the most dangerous time for the dog. Toxins released when the stomach is untwisted get into the blood stream and can affect the heart. Generally, if your dog survives the 3-5 days post surgery, they will heal. Dr. Larry Glickman, an epidemiologist at the Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine, conducted a study on canine bloat. His study followed more than 1,900 dogs to help identify risk factors for this disease. Here's what the study showed.

- Dogs with the greatest risk of developing bloat have deep, narrow chests.
- The risk of bloat is slightly higher in males than in females.
- Lean dogs were found to be at higher risk for developing bloat than overweight dogs.
- Older dogs are at a higher risk than younger dogs.
- Heredity is also an issue. If your dog's relatives have developed bloat, he also has a higher risk of developing the disease.
 - Fast eaters are at higher risk for developing bloat. Many believe this is because the dog swallows more air when eating fast.
 - Elevated food bowls have been shown to increase the risk of bloat.
 - Dogs with nervous, fearful or aggressive personalities have a higher incidence of bloat.
 - Stress, such as that which occurs during kenneling, is an important precipitating factor.
 - Dogs who were fed only dry food and dogs who ate only one large daily meal were at a higher risk for bloat.
 - Dogs who ate foods high in oil or fat (such as sunflower oil or animal fat) have a higher risk of developing the disease. (If the oil or fat is listed as one of the top four ingredients in the food, it is considered a high-fat food.)

I would like to add a few extra words. The stress that can occur from kenneling can also occur when a dog is being groomed, especially an older dog. As they age, our dogs may become more anxious about things that did not bother them when they were younger. It may be because of failing health, eye sight, loss of hearing and it also may make them more clingy than they were. Boarding an old dog or sending one out to be groomed may cause enough stress that they bloat. As your dog ages, try to avoid these situations.

Individual dogs may have different symptoms, but here are the most common symptoms I have seen or experienced:

Inability to sit or lay down comfortably, attempts to vomit, usually producing only a slimy, ropy saliva, behavior change: an active, high energy dog may stand with a roached back (looks like an upside down "u", head hanging and not responding in their usual way; a more laid back dog may pace almost frantically, and you may see a pain grimace (lips drawn back tightly, teeth showing), panting heavily.

If you even think your dog is bloating, take him to the vet immediately !!! If there is no stomach swelling, insist the vet take an x-ray to make sure. If caught early enough, the swelling may not yet be visible...and some dogs seem to bloat "higher" than others. If the vet will not x-ray, go to another. This is your dog's life and you should do all you can to make sure they are okay.

Bloat surgery is very expensive and the whole experience can really deplete your dog's life energy. Try as much as possible to prevent them from bloating. Here are some suggestions that may help:

- Feed twice daily, instead of once.
- Do not feed gas-producing foods (gas causing beans, cabbage, onions, etc.)
- Do not let your dog exercise strenuously one hour prior to eating. A good rule of thumb: if he is panting from exertion or heat, do not feed until he stops panting. Do not let your dog exercise strenuously one-two hours after eating.
- If your dog has been out in the heat, or exercising strenuously, don't let him gulp quantities of water.
- Do not give him just ice cubes. Give him ice cubes barely covered with water instead.
- Don't let him roll on his back after eating or drinking.
- If he is being fed a dog food that swells in water, wet the food and let it absorb all the water before feeding.

FINALLY: SANNO'S HOME

Good things as well as bad things start with a phone call. This was a heartbreaker; Rob Gilson, an adopter of many years had returned from letting his last Akita, Sieje aka "CJ", go to the Rainbow Bridge. This are the calls I dread more than any others I think. We all know how much hurt is involved when our Akitas go.

Every time an adopter calls when they lose a dog, I feel as if I have lost one of my own. Rob and I spoke for a while and he told me he would be back to adopt another when he felt ready. Less than a week later, he called back. He wanted to come and meet the guys we had available. He and his good friend Carol Anne came down to meet Osamu and Romeo, but particularly wanted to meet Malachai, the 18 month male we had recently taken in. Osamu was his usual affectionate self, Romeo was not feeling well and acting out. Of course Rob and Carol Anne were also deluged with attention from some of the resident dogs. Then we took off for Aaron's house. Aaron is one of our new foster homes and we are so thankful that he stepped up and volunteered. Malachai, who is Aaron's second foster, was his usual unflappable self and really impressed Rob. I told him if Malachai was the one, that was fine, but to wait and meet the other dogs first. Having just lost a dog, Rob really was interested in a younger one, but agreed to wait on his decision until he had met them all. I really wanted him to meet Sanno as did Puller. I felt deep inside that Rob was the perfect home for Sanno and vice versa. I found Sanno to be quite the gentleman when he stayed with me after leaving his foster home and thought he would seamlessly merge into Rob's life, although I did not mention this to Rob. I prefer adopters to have a clean slate when they meet the dogs; I am happy to give input once they have met everyone. We made arrangements for me to pick Rob up at the Springfield Metro in 3 days and take him to the kennel in Myersville, Md. A week prior to this, Blondie, who was one of the dogs taken in a humane case in Petersburg, VA four years ago, came back to us by way of a divorce. I found a place to temporarily stash her and had to pick her up from there the same day as meeting Rob. I went and got Ms Blondie, and we took off for Springfield. I was not sure how she would behave in the car, so I crated her. Once we arrived and I took her out with me, we ran into Rob. The three of us set out, Blondie now hanging out in the car with us. She was VERY well behaved and I was quite impressed with how she was handling losing her home. The kennel in Myersville is a good distance into the mountains, so we had a long ride with good company and wonderful scenery. Stacey arrived shortly after we did and brought out the big boy. Rob walked around with him and I could see that yes, this was his dog. He was older than Rob had wanted, but as I point out to many people, the heart does not use logic. It just knows what dog is right, regardless of age or other impediments. Lord knows I have had my share of dogs with disabilities and I would not trade a single one of them for a perfectly formed and healthy dog (well, maybe Kato...not really). And I think Sanno spoke to Rob's heart. I was so thrilled for Sanno that I was almost in tears.

He had had so much that had gone on in his life, and was so deserving of the best home and in Rob, that is exactly what he got. This is one of the "up" sides of rescue and since I share so many "downs" with you, I wanted to share this also because the only reason we are able to have these successes is because of the support of our Armac adopters, foster homes, volunteers, and contributors. Now to find a home for Blondie and Osamu...!



New Product for Bloat-Prone Breeds:

Everyone with a dog that is prone to bloat. There is a new supplement that I highly recommend. It promotes transit of food through the digestive tract, prevents gas and bloating and is excellent for those dogs with Gastric reflux since it lessens the amount of acid. It is called Normalizer-3 from Sedona Labs. It is a mix of probiotics and digestive enzymes plus FOS all in one small capsule. I suggest it for all large breeds, especially Akitas. Google it for a supplier—it is not expensive.

One capsule per meal is the recommended dose but you can increase that to 2 capsules per meal if your dog is prone to gastric disturbances.

CHEF HILLARY'S KITCHEN BY HILLARY LAMAY

P'Nut Butter Dog Biscuits

Give your furr-legged pal this sweet protein-packed treat!

Ingredients:

2 3/4 c whole wheat flour
 2 3/4 c all-purpose flour
 3 tbsp dark brown sugar
 1 tsp salt
 3 eggs
 1 c peanut butter
 1/3 c vegetable oil
 1 c water

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper and set aside.

Combine all dry ingredients in mixing bowl. Add eggs and peanut butter, mixing well. Blend in oil and water until dough is smooth. Cover dough and allow to rest for about 20 minutes.

Roll dough out onto floured board to 1/2 inch thick and cut into desired shapes. Place on prepared cookie sheet and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, depending on size of dog treat. The biscuits will look light brown in color and will be very hard. Customize your dog biscuits before baking by using a toothpick or the tip of a small paring knife to write their name. Garnish with ribbon.

HINT: When measuring peanut butter, line your measuring cup with plastic wrap for easy clean up. Also, wrap your rolling pin in plastic wrap to prevent any peanut oils from being absorbed into the wood of your rolling pin.



**Bow Wow
 Wow
 Yipee
 Yo, Yipee
 HEY YOU!**

Do you have a yummy recipe your pup loves?

Is it healthy and easy? We'd love to put it in the next newsletter! E-mail

Chef Hillary with your submission:

HJLaMay@yahoo.com

Follow ARMAC on Facebook!

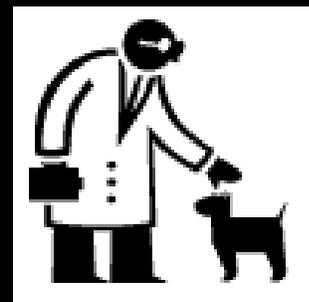
Join our groups by searching for:

'Akita Rescue Mid Atlantic Coast' or 'ARMAC Volunteers'

AFFORDABLE AND CONVENIENT SPAY/NEUTER OPTIONS ARE NOW AVAILABLE TO OUR COMMUNITY!

For our Northern VA audience: The Neuter Commuter travels to PW County to transport animal into Washington, D.C., where the spay/neuter procedures are performed. There are no income requirements and anyone can participate, but space is limited to 30 animals each month. Low-cost services, such as rabies vaccinations, will be offered for animals receiving the spay/neuter procedures. Full instructions and details are provided on the application form. All reservations and payments are made in advance and on-line. For more information: www.pwspca.org

For our Maryland audience: SNAP, Inc offers low cost spay/neuter certificates, financial aid to those unable to afford spay/neuter surgeries, and to reduce pet over-population through sterilization. Anyone of any age who needs assistance for spay/neuter surgeries should contact the SNAP Program. For more information: <http://community.carr.org/>



AVAILABLE ORPHANS

CURRENT LIST OF AVAILABLE AKITA RESCUE (ARMAC, INC.)
WWW.AKITARESCUE.ORG TO VIEW MORE PHOTOS

The majority of these dogs came from animal shelters, therefore "owner surrender" does not necessarily mean they were received directly from a home.

Cora—s/f, dob 2000, Red w/white markings, black mask. Old style girl with lots of life left, LOVES people



and wants desperately to be in her own home with NO OTHER PETS. She is currently being kenneled and loves to go out on a lunge line for hiking in the fields. She was picked up by a shelter as a stray and whelped 9 puppies in the shelter. Her puppies found homes, don't you think she deserves one?

Mira s/f, est. dob 2008. Good with people. Slightly timid at first but very trusting to those who know her. Loves socializing with folks in her foster's hometown. Still anxious in her crate but she is improving. She sits, stays, lays, and will roll over. Needs to be walked by an experienced handler. Would prefer being the only dog.

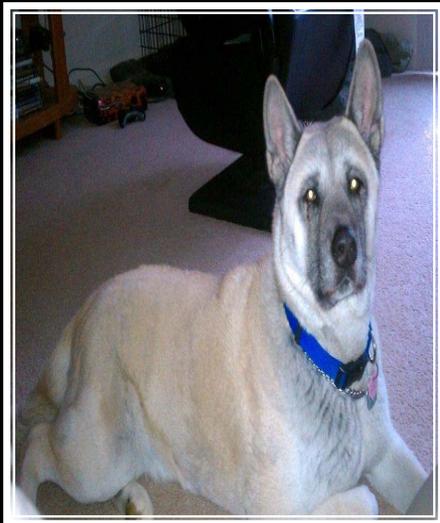


Princess — s/f, dob 2005, fawn with black mask, white markings. Our classic beauty is still waiting for Prince Charming. She is housebroken, good with most dogs, obedient, affectionate. She is responding well to her meds for Pemphigus and just needs a forever home.



Blondie:

Blondie was one of the Petersburg dogs that ARMAC took in 2006. She, her w siblings, parents and grandmother were all taken on humane hold. The parents had temperament issues and were euthanized. The 3 older pups and grandma found homes. Unfortunately Blondie is the victim of a divorce and was returned to ARMAC. She is a small 5 yr old female, who is wonderful with all people, but not small animals. She has not been fence fighting with other dogs at the kennel, so may be able to live with an easy going male. She is crate trained, rides well in a car, walks well on a leash. If you think Blondie would complete your family, please contact us.



Osamu

AKA Sam is a big cuddle bug who is crate trained, housebroken, gets along well with most dogs, can live with cats, but will need to be watched closely initially, rides well in a car. He was a big hit at the Pet Expo where people of all ages were able to pet and cuddle with him. He thrives on attention. He recently achieved his CGC (Canine Good Citizen) and would be an excellent dog for someone interested in obedience training/competing. He jumped the fence at his first foster home, but here he goes out, does his business and then



lays on the porch and watches the world go by. He is not a big barker when people pass by, but will let you know...loudly...if his meal is late. He is an excellent companion who loves affection but is also content just to lay down near his person. If you think he would fit in your household, give us a call.

AKITAS OF THE MONTH

**KONNICHIIWA
FROM CHUCK
& PEPPER IN
OKINAWA!**



Congrats To OSAMU for completing his Canine Good Citizen Certification and Lucky George on his adoption! WOOO!

**Thank you
for your donations!!**

Rodger Pudwill
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To Donate To Other Akitas in need ,visit Akitarescue.org



**THANKS TO OZZY
FOR HIS MARCH
MADNESS
DONATIONS!**



GUARDS TADAO, KAJUN AND SAKI KEEPING WATCH!

ABOUT ARMAC

Akita Rescue, Mid-Atlantic Coast, Inc. (ARMAC), is one of the oldest Akita rescue groups in the United States, and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. ARMAC was founded by a small group of concerned Akita owners and has been serving the Mid-Atlantic seaboard since 1984.

Our highest priority is to save and re-home Akitas in area shelters, however, we also address a wide variety of Akita needs such as educating potential owners, referrals, support for Akita owners, and evaluations of dogs in private homes and shelters.

If you can find it in your heart to foster, adopt, donate or volunteer, please visit our website for more information on how you can get involved:

<http://akitarescue.rescuegroups.org/>



**Upcoming
Events**

Reston Pet Fiesta
May 7, 2011



ARMAC

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 Janet McMillan (703) 931-852

Barkbusters (410) 308-3768
 Paw Paws Canine College (304) 492-4075
 Capital Dog Trainers (301) 587-5959
 Ira Hartwell (301) 261-8463

Nebel Street Animal Hospital
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Norbeck Animal Hospital
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 Palmer Vet Clinic (301) 293-2121

Ballston Animal Hospital (703) 528-2776
Dr. Learman: MapleShade Animal Hospital (703) 670-7668
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Akita Friendly Vets