

Breed Rescue & Re-Homed Dogs

A subject near and dear to my heart

By Huguette Rainfoirth

I have a soft spot for rescue dogs, and, of course, my own in particular. I have, over many years, taken in my share. We moved to the farm in August of 1977. By June of 78, we had six drop-offs who lived out their lives with us. Many more came along over the next 35 years.

My last drop-off, Bella, was thrown out of a passing car in May of 2012. It took me eight months to coax her out of the woods. She would not come within 100 feet of me and would only go to the food if I got back into the van and started the motor. By September, with the help of a friend and two young puppies on a 50-foot leash, we got her to follow us, from afar, to my sugar shack, where I had set up a dog bed, food, and water. Every day, Joyce would come with the puppies so Bella could play with them around the shanty. Then, one early October morning, I saw her at the bottom of the hill to my great surprise. My four woofies leaped off the balcony; I thought, "Oh my stars" they will kill her but low and behold, they ran and played for an hour! It turned out that Bella loved other dogs; it was people she was fearful of. The next step was getting her into the backyard so that I could get close enough to touch her. Getting her in the house is a whole other story! Armed with patience, for four years I walked around never looking her in the eyes as she followed the other dogs and me around.

It has been eight years now, we have come a long way. Bella has emerged from being scared and untrusting to being my little shadow. She always needs to know where I am and comes waging and wiggling for cuddles and kisses. Bella still has her issues, especially with men. She barks at everybody, and will not go to anyone but me, but making progress, lately she happily greets a female friend.

I have given her a home, but the adoration she gives me in return is both heartwarming and humbling.

Pet Overpopulation

At least 600,000 dogs in Canada are euthanised every year (500,000 in Quebec alone). There are thousands of dogs waiting to enter rescues in every province, and sadly, many Canadians seem blissfully unaware of our homeless dog overpopulation. Most Canadians are uninformed about how dogs are "euthanised" in our own country — lethal injection (the most "humane"), gas chambers and gunshot. It is heart sickening.

Humane societies, shelters and canine rescue groups feel the direct impact of irresponsible owners and unethical breeders. (Maybe our "disposable culture," can assume some of the blame for the prevalence of dog dumping.) Surprisingly, many purebred dog owners are unaware that most purebred dog clubs have a Breed Rescue.

I am not one who advocates for banning purebred dog breeding by responsible and ethical breeders, in order to accommodate all the strays. I do not believe that by breeding pedigree dogs, the ethical breeders increase the over-filled shelter problems. Taking in a rescue dog and buying a puppy of a particular breed from a carefully



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Kazimir: His Story



Kazimir was born in Québec on October 12, 2016, in conditions that left much to be desired. According to the breeder, an injury to the right hind limb (*stretched nerve or tendon of inner thigh*) when he was a puppy left him with a limp, followed by an injury to the tail, which was eventually amputated. He also had a very deep sore on his left hind leg, which was left untreated for months. All this made him no longer salable. At age two and a half, he was given to a man who could not afford to care or feed him properly. In this miserable state, Kazimir was surrendered to the Irish Wolfhound Club of Canada Rescue on September 17. Over three days, a relay team of dedicated volunteers drove him from Lac-Saint-Jean to Saint-Hyacinthe, where for the next two months, he was loved and cared for by Sonia, a dedicated retired Vet technician. When Liz and Brian, an Ontario couple, saw the article regarding Kazimir in the IWCC Bulletin, they immediately emailed me saying they wanted to give Kazimir a forever home. Kaz is loved, happy, and thriving in his new home with family & Henry the cat!



selected breeder are two very different things.

In my opinion, Canada's pet overpopulation problem is due to unregulated dog breeding and "unscrupulous" puppy mills churning out an endless supply of puppies whose parents live caged in filthy conditions, all to cater to demand created by unsuspecting, guilt-ridden adoptive families.

First, Do Your Homework:

I can never stress enough the importance of finding a reputable and responsible breeder; someone who chooses their breeding stock carefully for health and temperament, who carefully examines their puppy's future living conditions, and who offers support for the entire life of the dog.

Dogs purchased from responsible breeders or adopted from reputable rescue groups usually have somewhere to go if their owners cannot keep them. Many come with a contract that insists the dog be returned if re-homing is necessary.

- Research the breed to see if they fit your lifestyle.
- Assess what that addition to your household will mean in terms of dollars and cents.
- Contact the Breed Club.
- Buy only from a reputable and responsible breeder

While we all believe that owning a dog is a commitment not to be taken lightly, sometimes life takes a turn. A weakened financial situation, changing lifestyles, a divorce, the loss of a loved one or job stress, and pet ownership becomes too much for some. These dogs, having nowhere to go, often end up at humane societies, in shelters, or with canine rescue groups. Whatever the case, many dog lovers enjoy the good fortune of living with these re-homed dogs.

Problems that Come with Rescues

One should be aware that there are potential problems when it comes to rescues, and they are often severe.

The first problem is often provenance. A great many behavioural problems in dogs come from the first few months of their lives. An animal born in filth on a puppy mill farm or the streets of a third world country does not have the experience of humans' loving hands to ensure that they got off to a good start in life. If you do not know where the dog comes from, it can be a ticking time bomb. Sometimes all you can be sure of, regarding a rescue dog, is that it is a dog. The sad fact is that, even if the owners are known, some lie or could not care less.

A good vet can give you an idea of age and condition of a dog, but cannot tell you precisely what it is. It is possible to do DNA testing on a dog, but not always available or financially feasible. So often, you do not have more than a vague idea of the dog's genetic makeup, and with that, it's potential character problems.

Then there is the question of whether or not the dog will fit in. Any dog introduced into an existing family or pack has to work with all the human family members and fit in with their schedules and activities. And the list goes on and on. Now, should this discourage someone from looking at a rescue? **No!** Go into the situation with your eyes wide



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Loulou: Her Story



Loulou was born in Ontario, January 25, 2017, and sold to a family in Québec. Due to illness, their owner took Loulou & Nelly to a vet clinic in Chicoutimi to be euthanized. Both young and healthy, the vet requested that they be surrendered and placed for adoption. Véronique, a former IW client, was immediately contacted, and she, in turn, called me. Together we went to work to find these beautiful souls a forever home. A lovely military family in the Saguenay with four boys to play with adopted Loulou.

« Loulou, une surprise inattendue dans ma vie! C'est par pure coïncidence tout simplement que j'ai eu la chance d'adopter ma belle chienne. Des amis, auparavant éleveurs de lévriers Irlandais, s'étaient retrouvés avec 2 beaux chiens pour qui ils devaient rapidement trouver un nouveau foyer. De fil en aiguille je suis allé faire la rencontre de Loulou qui allait vite devenir ma meilleure amie. Dès son premier jour dans la famille; je savais que c'était le meilleur chien du monde. Tellement douce, gentille et délicate malgré son imposante apparence. Très obéissante et propre elle était tout simplement parfaite pour nous. Loulou est vite devenue ma compagne de jogging et un membre important dans notre famille. Bref, mon lévrier est sans aucun doute l'un des plus beaux cadeaux que j'ai reçus dans ma vie. »



open. Know yourself: are you emotionally prepared and willing to invest? Don't rescue a dog only to give it up again. This is also true when getting a purebred puppy! If you opt to adopt your pet, do it from a shelter. You will not only save a life, you will also get great value for your money. All pets are sterilized, vaccinated, de-wormed, and assessed for behavioural problems.

If you opt for a purebred animal, that is no problem – but get an animal with a pedigree. Whenever possible, try to meet your newly adopted puppy's parents and see the littermates. Are they healthy-looking? Are the premises clean? Do the parents exhibit normal behaviour? It may not always be possible to meet the father, since he may not belong to the mother's owner, but still insist on meeting the mother. If the mother is not present, the pet most likely comes from a pet farm.

Whatever you decide to do, do not buy your pet from individuals on Kijiji. You may just be sponsoring a pet farm.

Help Stop Cruelty – See Something, Say Something

Animal abuse is on the rise across Canada. Throughout the country, thousands of commercial pet-breeding facilities and backyard breeders produce millions of animals for sale in pet stores and in online ads. Often known as puppy mills, these facilities repeatedly impregnate female dogs that spend their entire lives in cages without human companionship. These unfortunate animals are often in intolerable environments, forced to produce litter upon litter, and destroyed after they become unprofitable assets.

Quebec has turned a corner and passed Bill 54, which explicitly recognizes animals as sentient beings. This led to the creation of a new piece of legislation protecting animals in Quebec. This new law significantly increases penalties for animal abuse, neglect, and cruelty, including fines of up to \$250,000, and jail time for repeat offenders. It also includes a more rigorous permit system for pet stores.

Last year alone, Montreal SPCA's Investigations and Inspections Department received over 10,000 complaints and reports of animal abuse and neglect, and inspected 18,213 animals, all species combined. Their amazing team of inspectors worked tirelessly to rescue animals from often-unimaginable pain and suffering. Please call (1-844-264-6289) to report any animal abuse.

According to the Ontario government, the Provincial Animal Welfare Services (PAWS) Act came into force on January 1, 2020, creating its first entirely provincial government-based animal welfare enforcement system. Ontario now has the most robust penalties in Canada for those who violate animal welfare laws. Provincial inspectors took over animal welfare calls in 2020. Anyone concerned about suspected animal neglect or abuse can call 1-833-9-ANIMAL (264625).

Animal shelter workers across Canada are calling for tougher laws against people convicted for such crimes, and Martin Cole of the Ontario Humane Society believes there should be provisions for a judge to give someone convicted of an offense against an animal a lifetime ban on pet ownership.

It's frightening and heartbreaking to see more and more pictures of people committing horrendous animal cruelty



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Niso: Her Story



Niso, was born in BC, in November 2016. She was purchased in 2017 by a BC couple who had seen an ad on Kijiji. Not registered, they were told that the litter was quite accidental. Following a traumatic family event, they moved to Montreal, QC. Despite losing everything, they felt fortunate that Niso was able to move with them.

Unfortunately, the husband was being transferred out of province for his job, and their new landlords had been extremely firm about their no-pet policy. It was with a very heavy heart that they wrote to me in hopes that I could help. I fostered Niso for two weeks. Guylaine, through her networking, was instrumental in finding the perfect home for Niso with a vet in St Luce Sur Mer, QC.



on Facebook. Psychologists agree, saying people who abuse animals are at risk for hurting children. In one survey, 71% of domestic violence victims reported that their abuser also targeted pets. One example that made the News: **Nikita a one-year-old Rottweiler pup.** *Her owner chained the dog to the back of a truck and dragged her down a country road.* Let's try to put an end to this injustice and remember "Evil prevails when good men do nothing". (Edmund Burke)

A Global Problem

Canada, known for its no-kill shelters, has increasingly become a haven for America's unwanted pets to escape death row. The number of dogs entering Canada far exceeds the number of dogs leaving. It would be easier for us to list the countries who haven't contacted us than list the names of the countries who have.

Dog overpopulation is a global problem. Ideally, it would be wonderful if every Province could establish a neuter/spay policy and assist these rescues with their costs. Still, until the ideal becomes a reality, this problem falls on the volunteers.

The Risk of Spreading Infectious Disease

Our Vets are concerned about the risk of introducing foreign disease into our canine population by bringing in strays from other countries. Every country has its specific occurrence of CVBDs (Canine Vector-Borne Diseases), diseases transmitted by parasites (also called vectors) such as ticks, flies, fleas, sand flies, and mosquitoes, depending on climate and endemic vectors.

Lyme Ticks crossing our border, migrating birds spreading the bird flu, mosquitos with heartworm, and the list goes on. Doctors and Vets who deal with this global world have our admiration. We already dread spreading Parvo, Distemper, or Rabies. Now add dogs from another country with the potential of introducing weird worms and ugly parasites, and it's a challenge for man, his dog and the medical profession.

My heart goes out to all these poor animals, I wish we could save them all, but we CAN'T. Our only consolation is to keep Loren Eisley's "Starfish Story" in mind:

One day a man was walking along the beach, when he noticed a boy hurriedly picking up and gently throwing things into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, "Young man, what are you doing?" The boy replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die." The man laughed to himself and said, "Don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make any difference!" After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said, "I made a difference to that one."



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Nelly: Her Story



Nelly was born in the Saguenay on February 9, 2018, and owned by the same family as Loulou. On February 12, 2019, they were both left with the vet to be euthanized. Fortunately the vet asked that they be surrendered and placed for adoption. I immediately thought of Julie, a new contact that had helped me over the Christmas holidays with a heart wrenching surrender from the Beauce. Godfoye was too ill and could not be saved. Heartbroken over the lost, Julie was hesitant to try again. Still, I sent her pictures of Nelly and Loulou, after a few days, she decided to adopt Nelly. Nelly made friends with the cat as soon as she arrived home. She was very shy and nervous with people but in time she overcame her fears. Today she will greet people, no problem. Nelly is pictured on our front cover with her best friend Will.

