



Tim thanks Ellie for "sharing her views."



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ARWNY Adopter Spotlight

How Akita Rescue of Western New York helped an abandoned dog find a new family and meet one of Buffalo's favorite sons!

By Pat Kehs

On December 6, 2005, my wife, Lee, and I lost our beloved 13-year-old Akita, Lucy to cancer. Lucy left us on the exact day of the tenth anniversary of her adoption though Akita Rescue Mid-Atlantic (ARMAC). Lee and I both knew that we wanted another Akita in our lives and we also knew that the best way to find the right Akita for us was through Akita Rescue.

Because of our experience with the breed, we knew we wanted a female dog that was approximately two years old and was housebroken. We knew that Akita Rescue dogs are carefully evaluated so that prospective owners can get a real sense of the health and personality of the dogs awaiting new homes.

Lee and I live in Northern Virginia so our first call was to ARMAC. Unfortunately, ARMAC did not have a dog at the time that was a good fit for us. Our home was feeling awfully quiet and empty so we decided to go online and try searching for a dog. A Google search led us to the Akita Rescue of Western New York (ARWNY) web site. We were amazed by how many beautiful dogs were awaiting adoption in upstate New York.

But there was one dog that caught our eye right away: Ellie. A brindle and white beauty described as "sweet, loving and playful". One of the photos had her on her back waving to the camera as if to say "take me home and let's play!" The more we looked at Ellie, the more we fell in love with her, so



Ellie discovers that there's fish in the pond!

Life with Nancy!

Hi and welcome to the wonderful ARWNY family! This is our first official newsletter and we hope to publish it at least 3 times a year – also having pdf formats available as well. But I thought it may be interesting to know first and foremost how ARWNY came to be.

Last year I lost 5 beloved pet children. I work from home as an editor for various publishing companies. My "kids" are extremely close to me as we are together 24/7 honestly and truly. So losing 5 in one year was beyond difficult. I lost Nory first, then Nicholas, then Victoria, then Helena, and lastly Micah. ALL WERE EXTREMELY difficult to loose. But here is what I had posted to the Akita Adopters list (started for ARWNY adopters) when my beloved Victoria died 11/11/06:

we decided to submit an application and inquiry.

Both Kathy DeWees and Nancy Lamm of ARWNY got back to us right away. Kathy was fostering a number of Akitas at her New Jersey kennel and Ellie was up in Buffalo, New York with Nancy. Ellie had been found abandoned; tied to a tree in a rough inner city neighborhood in Buffalo and left with a bag of dog food. Nancy had recently recovered Ellie and was evaluating and

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Kathy's Words of Wisdom

Welcome to the 1st edition of the ARWNY NEWSLETTER! We are so proud of this endeavor, you have NO idea! We have wanted to do one for so long but with our busy schedules we just never were able to. But finally --here we are! Its a miracle on paper; so treasure this issue, ok? Who knows -- 100 years from you maybe you can make a few bucks selling it on eBAY!!

Now, for those who don't know me, let me introduce myself. I got my first Akita from a shelter back in 1986 -- his name was Buddy. He took me from being a dog-lover to becoming an Akita fanatic. Buddy's issues eventually ushered me into the Akita world because I reached out to everyone I could find (long before the computer age) thru magazines or books who knew about Akitas for help with his human aggression issues. Sadly I couldn't save him and I was broken hearted at failing him. I swore I'd never own another Akita but then I met a great Akita breeder who showed me what the breed was meant to be. After that, I got a female puppy from that great breeder and then bought a male puppy from a not-so-great breeder; I quickly learned the differences between the two!!

By then, I was also helping do homechecks for the only Akita rescue in the area - Puller and Jody from the MD area. I soon helped start a branch of the Akita Rescue Society of America up here in NJ, then went on to found Delaware Valley Akita Rescue Inc with Margie Rutbell. Eventually I bought a boarding kennel in NJ to foster the Akitas in our rescue which was a wonderful learning experience -- nothing teaches you more about the breed you love than having 25-30 of them from all lines be it good breeder, backyard breeder or puppymill, from all over the country, living under your kennel roof at the same time!!

After personal issues caused me to give up my boarding kennel, I figured I would give up rescue. But Nancy Lamm came into my life just as the kennel was winding down for me; she convinced me I could NOT walk away from Akitas. With her help, I stayed in rescue, joining Akita Rescue of Western NY, Inc. I then ended up back in the kennel business when my kids & I started up Camp

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Life with Nancy! (continued)

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She was born a pawn in an unethical breeder's hands.

She died a legacy.

Morr's Magdalena's Victoria -- 4/21/95 to 11/11/06! Affectionately known as Victoria of Nic & Vic Productions, Vic left today to continue her rescue and therapy work across the bridge and to go join her beloved Nicholas who died 8/23/06.

Victoria's breeder bragged in court transcripts how she knowingly bred dysplastic dogs and then would "throw out the line and reel in the unsuspecting pet owner." On the end of Victoria's line was more than this breeder could handle -- a shark was there that refused to allow this to continue. Victoria in the end won -- she won in court and she won when the breeder subsequently "stopped" breeding. And Victoria won because of her spirit, devotion, character, and her undying loyalty and love

When she was 14 months old, I was faced with putting her to sleep or undertaking what the orthopedic surgeons told me would be a "lifetime of orthopedic surgeries." I had gotten Victoria as therapy for my husband who in his 40s almost died and had a quadruple bypass (the first of two). She came and performed magically -- healing us all. I refused to turn my back on her in her time of need. She overcame two hip surgeries, 3 cruciate surgeries, 2 patella surgeries, chronic airways disease, bloat, and hypothyroidism. She defied the odds and almost made 12 years of age -- but without Nic to bolster her spirit and legs, I couldn't let her suffer anymore. Today, she left the dignified lady she was throughout her lifetime.

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ARWNY Adopter Spotlight (continued)

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fostering her in a local Buffalo kennel. We received the following e-mail from Nancy:

“Well Pat, just get in the car and start driving to Kathy's and I will send Ellie down to her!! SHE IS THE ONE FOR YOU!!!!!! She is beyond gorgeous -- look at that head piece on a female who is not even quite 2 years old. She is housebroken and very neat in her kennel. She is a sweet loving goofball who is just well SWEET! She is a beauty -- deep rich black brindle with white. What more can I say! Check out her pictures and if you agree, Kathy is coming to Binghamton this Sunday and I will personally get Ellie to her! You will not be sorry!”



Ellie on adoption day at Kathy's kennel in NJ.

Lee and I had a big decision to make. We were bonding with a dog that we had never met and who was all of the way up in Buffalo! But we had faith in the breed and we had faith in Akita Rescue. Nancy had evaluated our application and not only did she feel that Ellie was a good match for us, but she had found a way to get Ellie from Buffalo, NY to Kathy's kennel in Southern New Jersey – only two hours away from our home.

We also had some personal connections to Buffalo. My late father, Harry Kehs, had grown up there; and just a few months before Lucy's passing, Lee and I had attended the 27th Annual Buffalo Nite on Capitol Hill. This fun event, sponsored by the New York State Society, features an array of food and drink native to Buffalo and honors a distinguished Buffalonian. Past honorees have included comedian Mark Russell, Bills coach Marv Levy, and *Meet The Press* host Tim Russert. Coincidentally, I work for

NBC as a lighting director and cameraman for *Meet The Press*.

So with all that Buffalo magic in the air for us, we decided we had to say yes to meeting Ellie.

The adoption went very smoothly. As promised, Nancy and Kathy worked together to get Ellie transferred to New Jersey and she turned out to be just as beautiful and sweet as described. When we brought her home to Virginia, she adapted to her new home very quickly. She also did very well in an all-Akita obedience training class.

One Sunday morning on the set of *Meet The Press*, I mentioned to Tim Russert that we had just adopted a “Buffalo Girl” and asked if he would be willing to take a picture with her to send back to Akita Rescue. Tim, a big booster of all things having to do with Buffalo, responded with an immediate, “Sure, bring her in!” So on January 15th right after the show's taping, Lee brought Ellie into NBC's Studio A for her photo shoot with Tim.

Everyone on the set was amazed at how beautiful and well-behaved Ellie was, telling us they couldn't believe she was a “rescue dog.” Tim posed with Ellie and myself



Tim Russert takes the leash.

and then took the leash and walked her around the studio. At one point, as we were posing together, Ellie turned to Tim and spoke to him with a big “RRROOO!” to which Tim then thanked Ellie for “sharing her views.”

I have worked on the show for nearly 10 years and as far as I know, this is the first time there has ever been a dog on the set during the 58 years of *Meet the Press*.

I'd like to end with a deeply heartfelt “thank you” to Nancy, Kathy and everyone who pours their life and soul into Akita Rescue. Thanks for all you do to protect, nurture and foster this magnificent breed.



Pat Kehs, Ellie and Tim Russert on the set of Meet The Press.

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