



*Every  
animal  
matters*



Wine Country Animal Lovers is a grass roots, all-volunteer organization. We are a group of animal lovers willing to donate our time and resources to making a difference for every animal we can. But like any organization, it takes money to help animals. Medical costs, food, supplies, and various other costs are unavoidable. For many without time, donating is a great way to make a difference. Please use the envelope enclosed in this newsletter to help us help animals.



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The newsletter of Wine Country Animal Lovers

ISSUE 9

WINTER 2018



Reba and her nine puppies were scheduled to be euthanized before being rescued by WCAL.

## A Gift For Reba

It was the season of giving and the time was fast approaching when Reba would deliver the most precious gift of all.

As last Christmas drew near, so did the time when the sweet, vulnerable 2-year-old pit bull mix would bring a new litter of puppies into the world. What Reba didn't know was that she also needed someone to give her the gift of life.

Reba had been relinquished at a public animal shelter by a family who said they were moving and couldn't support a pregnant dog. Dismayed officials came to the

painful conclusion that they had no room for another adult pit bull and a litter of puppies. They scheduled her to be euthanized.

Reba may have had a sense that time was short, or maybe she was just lucky. Either way, on the morning she was scheduled to be killed, she began popping out babies. First one, then another ... and another and another and another until she had nine new mouths to feed.

Shelter officials became even more des-

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# Speaking For Animals



By Pam Ingalls

Outgoing Board President

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## Keeping WCAL vibrant with new ideas and energy

Having been on numerous non-profit boards, I firmly believe that the most effective organizations embrace change and new energy. Bringing in new viewpoints and ideas often requires allowing new people to have greater influence over the process.

After much personal soul-searching, I've made the decision to step back as president of WCAL to pave the way for new energy. I am not going anywhere and will remain an active WCAL board member, and will be just as busy rescuing and helping animals as I've always been. This is my heart's work.

In addition to our longtime board members, several new directors have been added in the past year. They are all eager to help, passionate about animals and bring great skills and ideas for the future of WCAL. I am looking forward to seeing them expand on what has already been built. Alissa McNair, WCAL's longtime vice president, who has been instrumental in bringing WCAL to where we are now, will be our new board president.

As WCAL grows and prospers, our underlying philosophy will remain the same. Our board remains committed to keeping WCAL an all-volunteer organization, a model that ensures virtually every donated dollar goes directly to help animals. We will all still be busy in our community and beyond, wherever animals need us!

WCAL has been actively helping animals for almost seven years now. How far we have come in that time! We now have a team of almost 100 foster families who have been the heart and soul of our efforts. It is only because of them and our other supporters that we have been able to fulfill WCAL's mission.

I am so proud of what has been accomplished and confident that we will be able to continue helping animals well into the future.

Thank you for all of your support over the past years.

In rescue,

*Pam Ingalls*

## *WCAL's Angels Foster families making animal rescue possible*

Wendy Brooks and Mark Doherty of Calistoga are two of Wine Country Animal Lovers' most active foster families, but they routinely helped animals long before there was a WCAL.

"We've always been the people who stop when we see a loose dog and make sure there are tags, and if he looks like he's in the wrong place, take him home and try to call his people," said Wendy.

It was exactly that kind of situation that led them to WCAL in April of 2017. Wendy was driving home from Sonoma County Airport when she stopped for what turned out to be a "very tired, weak" German shepherd on the road.

"She came right to the car and rolled over on her back, and I'm like, 'Oh, Man!'" said Wendy.



**Mark Doherty and Wendy Brooks with their new house guests from WCAL.**

Wanting to help the dog, but also wanting an organization to provide a structure for its future welfare, Wendy reached out to WCAL, starting a relationship that continues to this day. After the German shepherd, later named Echo, went to a permanent home, Wendy and Mark fostered two WCAL kittens named Rosie and Cooper. Two litters of kittens followed. Then came Charlotte, a pit bull mix, and McCoy, a Heeler mix. Then came Slash, another kitten, who recently went to a permanent

home. At which point WCAL President Alissa McNair called.

"She wasted absolutely no time asking whether we'd like three puppies," Wendy laughed.

Like most fosters, Wendy says she and Mark get as much out of their experiences as they give. And it's not only the animal relationships that are rewarding.

"You don't do this alone," she said. "The WCAL community is incredibly supportive and we are quick to help each other out."

Still, it's difficult to give up animals you've grown to love. So Wendy and Mark avoid getting their hearts broken when an animal leaves by focusing on the good that fostering does.

"We kind of think we have the ability to give animals a soft place to land while they're recovering from whatever life has thrown at them," said Wendy. "That's kind of where we see our niche. We're a warm, loving way station."

For further information on fostering for WCAL, call 707-800-5058.



# Kitten season a busy time at WCAL

*At the height of the season, as many as 75 kittens are in WCAL foster homes*

On January 1st, we typically have about 15 cats in our rescue program. Each week, as the weather warms and kitten season begins, more baby cats are born to stray mother cats and WCAL's phone quickly starts ringing with calls for help. The calls come from good Samaritans, whom we call "finders," and from people who suddenly wish they had spayed their cat before it was "too late." Local shelters are quickly overwhelmed and they begin to call WCAL for help, as well.

We usually begin stocking up on supplies in March to be ready for the flood of homeless kittens who have no safe place to grow up. By May, we are caring for 50 kittens on any given day, and at the high point of kitten season, WCAL has up to 75 cats and kittens in our foster homes. Thanks to our donors, we are able to provide all the food, pet supplies and medical care needed to get each and every one of these kittens adopted into loving homes.

Our network of volunteer foster homes are literally life savers for the small furry creatures they welcome into their homes. A young kitten's undeveloped immune system makes them especially vulnerable to disease and illness and when combined with poor nutrition, it's a recipe for disaster and heartbreak.

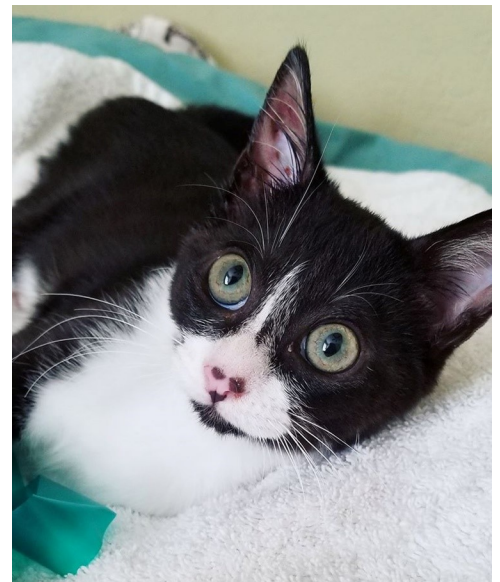
Dobie the kitten is one of many memorable little lives that WCAL saved this kitten season. He came to WCAL at 11 p.m. on Thursday May 24, covered in wood shavings and dog poop. He had just been discovered in the dog run with the family's three



**Dobie was discovered in a dog run, starving, dehydrated and covered in filth.**

large Dobermans, and this black and white kitten was in really bad shape at just 5 weeks old. Dobie was dehydrated, starving, suffering from an upper respiratory infection and covered in ringworm fungus. Caring for kittens like Dobie is one of the things that WCAL does best.

Thankfully, this skeleton of a kitten had a huge appetite and a strong spirit. Before long he was playing with little mice toys. Dobie spent five weeks in a WCAL foster home recovering before he was healthy enough to be neutered. He transformed into a beautiful, active, happy kitten and after four months with WCAL, Dobie and his pal Kaz were adopted together by a fun young family with a toddler who he adores.



**Four months later, a happy, healthy cat.**



**Caring for kittens is one of the things WCAL does best.**



# *‘We felt the writing was on the wall.’*

Pam Ingalls

*(Continued from page 1)*

perate to avoid euthanizing her and her puppies. They called Wine Country Animal Lovers, which became Reba’s Christmas savior.

“No one at the shelter said what the alternative was, but we felt the writing was on the wall,” said Pam Ingalls, outgoing WCAL president. “We felt we absolutely had to pull them from the shelter because that was the only way to ensure their safety.”

When Pam arrived at the shelter, workers had muzzled Reba, but she was so fearful that they couldn’t even get her to stand up. They managed to get her and her puppies onto a gurney and wheeled her to the WCAL van for the ride to the Calistoga Pet Clinic. Unfortunately, during the ride, the muzzle fell off, and that’s when things got stressful.

“She was very shut down and nobody had handled her because of her pregnancy, so her temperament was unknown,” said Pam. “We had to get her and the puppies out of the van and into the clinic, so I had to take a chance. I told her, ‘You’re going to have to trust me and I’m going to



**Reba, right, and her friend Ruby wait for book reading time at Erin Stagg’s home.**

have to trust you.’ ”

Pam carefully took the puppies one by one from the van. Reba watched nervously, but showed no sign of aggression.

An initial examination by Dr. Steve Franquelin showed Reba to have low body weight resulting from poor nutrition. Later, after she and the puppies were taken to her first long-term foster, WCAL board member Sara Alarcon, the puppies were diagnosed with roundworm and giardia. As Dr. Franquelin dealt with those problems, WCAL volunteers wrestled with a less serious challenge: what to name them. There were nine puppies and it was, after all, Christmas. And so they were named Dancer, Dasher, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen. And, of course, Rudolph.

While staying with Sara, “it quickly became evident that Reba was a great mom but also a very fearful dog,” Pam said. It also became clear that there were more medical issues at play. Several of the puppies were failing to flourish, and so more tests were ordered, and that’s when Reba was diagnosed with preeclampsia, a pregnancy-related disease that interfered with her ability to nurse. Even though the puppies were only 12 days old, the solution was to move the five smallest to three separate foster homes, where WCAL volunteers could bottle-feed them every four hours, 24 hours a day.

“It was like having a newborn,” laughed Jeanette Squire, who cared for three puppies for about two months. So much formula was needed that Jeanette and her family set up what they called their “formula factory,” making a gallon of the stuff at a time.

And not only were there the regular feedings, there were other chores, such as wiping puppy bottoms and the endless laundering of soiled towels.

Jeanette said the workload was so great that it would have

*(Continued on page 5)*



**Vixen is now mostly grown and goes by the name of Lucy.**

# *‘We met Reba and knew it was meant to be.’*

Erin Stagg

*(Continued from page 4)*

overwhelmed her without help from her family, especially husband Dan Montelli and daughter Kayleen Pauls.

“It took the whole family to take care of those three puppies,” she said.

Even with such dedicated nurturing, some of the puppies became ill and required more medical treatment. Donner, Comet and Prancer contracted pneumonia and WCAL took them to an emergency clinic in Santa Rosa, where they spent three days receiving expensive around-the-clock oxygen. A fourth puppy, Blitz, also became ill and was given an emergency blood transfusion, but soon succumbed to what vets believed was leukemia. Another puppy, Rudolph, died of unknown causes.

Slowly, however, the rest of the litter became stronger. By mid-February, the first of the puppies were available for adoption, and there was already a waiting list.

The two tan puppies, Dancer and Prancer, went first. By early April, all had been adopted.

Meanwhile, Reba went through a series of foster homes, including WCAL volunteer Lorelei Duckworth.

“She is about the sweetest girl I’ve ever met,” said Lorelei. “When they get nervous, most dogs lash out, but not her. She just shrinks down and goes into herself. She has no meanness in her at all.”

Then in early October, Reba found her forever home with Erin Stagg and her family in Angwin. Erin said it was love at first sight.

“We met Reba at her foster family’s home and knew it was meant to be,” she said.

Reba always thrives when there are other dogs to show her how to act, and at Erin’s home, her dog Ruby is there to help.

“Right now we have almost polar opposites,” said Erin. “We have Ruby, who’s afraid of almost nothing and will go down the slide at the playground with my kids and get on the merry-go-round, and then we have Reba, who still has days when she’s afraid of her own shadow.”



**Kayleen Pauls and her family fostered Prancer and two other puppies for two months.**

Erin and her family have experience with dogs that take extra effort, so they provide a perfect home for Reba. Erin says Reba still needs to have her crate, where she feels safe, and it’s special when she is “willing to come out from the crate and hang out.”

But there are also family times that Reba never misses. Every night, Erin reads to her two children, ages 4 and 7, and that’s an activity that Reba loves.

“She will hear me sit down on the bed and start reading, and regardless of where she is, she’ll run in and jump on the bed to start snuggling at book time,” said Erin. “She absolutely loves that cuddle time and if you are sitting down somewhere that she can cuddle up and get cozy, she will be there.”

And there’s never any doubt when Reba is happy.

“When she’s excited, her entire body wiggles,” said Erin.



# Don't be misled: Prong collars hurt!

Studies show that dog owners who use force equipment like prong collars have diminished bonds with their dogs and are less satisfied with their dogs' behavior.

For example, if pain is experienced every time your dog attempts to greet another dog, soon your dog will associate the presence of other dogs with pain and discomfort, leading to increased fear, reactivity and aggression. The same is true for any other stimuli that your dog might encounter.

Despite what some dog trainers or pet store employees might say, prong collars are not safe or humane. They do not train your dog but rather force the behavior you want to manage. There are NO good reasons to use them when many humane, more effective alternative walking equipment options exist.

Wine Country Animal Lovers supports force-free training and is happy to recommend trainers who practice this science-based method of training your dog.

Always  
use  
this ...



Never  
this:



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