

is similar: Find someone to pull the dog from the shelter (sometimes ASAP, if it's a kill shelter), find a foster home, and review the applicants to find a permanent placement possibility.

Find someone to pull the dog—in the Southern California area, that is most often me. Recently I pulled Stretch, so named by my husband because he weighed 22 pounds and was as tall as a Basenji. He was super sweet, with separation-anxiety issues. Then came Coco, a bit smaller at a chubby 17 pounds. He was already in a foster home, but the home could not keep him because he was “food aggressive,” and the foster mom was afraid he would hurt her senior citizen Griff. (We never saw food aggression while he was here; of course, as 99 percent of those reading this article probably do, I feed my each of my dogs in their own private spaces.)

The last I pulled had no name, although he eventually became Sir James. He was a filthy, matted mess. Shelters, at least the ones I've dealt with, do no bathing, grooming, or trimming. Some do administer DHAPP and bordetella vaccines, but that's it. Sir James left here the same day he came, thanks to prompt arrangements by the ABGRA, after three hours of trimming, bathing, dematting, and a trip to my vet.

From here they go to a foster home. There they are evaluated for behavioral issues, socialized, trained, and housebroken if needed.

Every rescue organization seems to have trouble finding foster homes. Potential foster homes generally receive a visit from a rescue coordinator to be sure they have a suitable situation. The foster time allows the dog to be evaluated and screened for potential placement issues: Does he get along with other dogs? Cats? How is he with children? Is he housebroken? Can he be left alone?

While the dog is being fostered, the rescue coordinator reviews applicants for permanent placement. Neither of the two national Griffon rescue groups will ship a dog.

Stretch went from my house, to a foster home, to a new owner—who returned him to the foster home, then decided she wanted him after all, then returned him again. (Can you say “ditz”?) He is now in a lovely permanent home.

Coco was fostered in the home of the rescue coordinator (she wears a few hats). Sir James was another Griff whose arranged foster home decided she could not have him—because she “couldn't deal with two male dogs.” (She already had an adopted rescue.)

The point is that the rescue coordinators work very hard to get these poor Griffs into permanent situations. These workers are undaunted and persevere to the end. My hat is off to them!

—Anne K. Catterson,
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Cavalier King Charles Spaniels

This heartfelt tribute to a Cavalier, a beautiful Blenheim dog whose life was well lived, moved many of us when we read it on an Internet list. It captures the very essence of Cavalier temperament and *joie de vivre*. Written by Glenda Schroeder, of Virginia, I want to share it with anyone who has ever truly loved a dog.

Remembering Berkeley

Today I said goodbye to my Berkeley, Ch. Shenandoah Danzig (Ch. Elvenhome Keep Going x Shenandoah Georgie Girl). He was 13. We shared many firsts together. He was my first Cavalier, my first champion, and my first show dog.

He was the first dog I showed at Westminster and at a national, and my only heart-and-soul dog; he was truly a blessing.

He taught me the true meaning of love and compassion, and it is because of him that I now have friends around the world, as well as many friends here in the U.S. and in Virginia. He is the reason I now have his sons and grand-

son at my feet, and I see him in them every day.

He thought ice cubes were filet mignon steaks and would patiently wait at the freezer door until I indulged him. Every day with him was a delight—he did not know the meaning of “downtime.” He was always ready for a game of ball, rain or shine. No matter how short a time I might have been gone, he was always waiting at the door, tail wagging, jumping up as if to ask, “*Where ya been?*”

He was the best Cavalier and dog I could have the privilege to care for and to be loved by, and he will always be my number-one Cavalier.

He was diagnosed with a mitral valve murmur at age 9 and went on meds at age 11. He had a full and wonderful day yesterday, but this morning he was not well and woke me up at 4 A.M. Although he ate his breakfast, he spent most of the day on my lap, getting weaker as the day went on, so I called my vet early this afternoon and held his head as he went to sleep one last time.

I know my dad was there to greet him with a pocketful of endless dog treats.

R.I.P. Berk, forever in my heart. — G.S.

Thank you very much for sharing this with us, Glenda.

—Stephanie Abraham,
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American Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club website: *ackcsc.org*

Chihuahuas

Our guest contributor for this issue is Justin Ward, chair of the Chihuahua Club of America's health committee.

Chiari-like Malformations and Syringomyelia in Chihuahuas

At the national specialty this year, the Chihuahua Club of America welcomed guest speaker Dr. Michael Podell, DVM, DACVIM (Neurology), to share his views on the subject of syringomyelia.

Dr. Podell began by cautioning dog owners against relying on online research, due to so much misinformation on the Internet. He then went on to describe the process of chiari-like malformations (CM) and their relation to syringomyelia (SM).

CM can occur in breeds with a rounded skull. It is essentially a malformation at the back of the skull that can cause restriction of the opening at the base of the skull that is reserved for the spinal cord.

There is a circulation system for the fluid inside the brain. The fluid normally flows to the base of the skull and travels down through the opening into the spinal cord. The presence of CM, however, can block the flow from the skull. When this occurs, fluid pressure builds up inside the skull. The fluid may then only pass down into the spinal cord in a jetlike fashion, which can cause a bulge of fluid (called a *syrinx*) to form inside the spinal cord. The presence of the syrinx in the spinal cord is called *syringomyelia*.

Symptoms of SM often occur in the adult dog. Symptoms vary, but they may include sensitivity of the neck, causing an urge to scratch the neck and shoulders. Often dogs will scratch the air near the neck, followed by intense pain around the neck and shoulder region, causing the dog to scream or yelp when touched. As the disease progresses, the dog may exhibit lameness and may progress to the point of paralysis.

It is important to remember that other disorders may present with similar symptoms. At this time the only way to diagnose CM and SM is with an MRI scan.

What does this mean for Chihuahuas?

Dr. Podell explained that they rarely see a Chihuahua for suspected SM symptoms. The diagnosis is usually made when a Chihuahua has an MRI done for another issue and the CM/SM is found at that time.

Many Chihuahuas seem to be asymptomatic, meaning they may have CM and possibly SM where symptoms are never present, living a long and

healthy life.

He went on to say that we should be mindful of these diseases. Breeders should be aware of SM symptoms so that they may perform scans on dogs presenting neurological signs. Do not use symptomatic dogs in a breeding program, and definitely do not line-breed on symptomatic dogs.

As time progresses and more Chihuahuas are scanned, we will have more information on how to proceed. The CCA Health Committee will be working on guidelines to be published next year.

A video of this speaker was made, and purchasing details will be on the CCA website during the coming year.

—Virginia Hauber,
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Chihuahua Club of America website:
Chihuahuaclubofamerica.com

Chinese Cresteds A Chinese Crested at Sea

Even after all these years with Chinese Cresteds, once in a while one of them does something that still just amazes me. Read this little story and be amazed too.

Derien Jastrzebski was raised with dogs. Born into a family that included Scottish Deerhounds, dogs were as much a part of her life as the humans. As she grew up, she learned to groom and to show in Junior Showmanship. When she graduated from high school, her senior picture was taken with her dog at her side.

Never one to settle for the ordinary, Derien applied and was accepted to the United States Merchant Marine Academy. This was the beginning of a career that put her into a world where dogs are not usually a part. Today, Derien is a Reserve Naval Officer who works for the Military Sealift Command.

Even though Derien loves her job, the many months out at sea meant being away from any dogs at home. The pain of not having a doggy companion was so great that Derien began to question her choice of careers.

And then something incredible happened. The captain of the USNS *Grapple*, the ship on which Derien had become permanent, had a cat on board the ship. The cat, already very old, became ill and had to be put to sleep. Derien began to think, “If a cat can live on a ship, why not a small dog?”

After a lot of thought, Derien approached the captain with her idea. Much to her surprise, the captain was very enthusiastic about it, and together they set about locating the perfect little dog and getting all the necessary paperwork.

The dog had to be small enough to be carried up the ladder wells, agile enough to live on a constantly moving surface, and mentally stable enough to adapt to life on a ship.

Derien’s father had a powderpuff Chinese Crested, and Derien had always been impressed with the little dog’s outgoing personality, so she contacted the breeder and found Raeli, a female powderpuff. Derien and the crew of the *Grapple* had to wait several months for their little girl to be old enough to leave home and for Derien to get back to land to pick Raeli up.

Raeli has fit right in with the life on a Navy ship. She has her own little Navy uniform and her own personal life jacket. Sweet and well behaved, she is the darling of the crew—especially the captain.

She has her own passport and, when the seas are rough, has better sea legs than most of the crew. But before you get the idea that life is just one big pleasure cruise for Raeli, she has responsibilities. She is the chief morale officer (aka the ship’s mascot) and is charged with passing out wet kisses and a sympathetic ear to sailors who are away from home and missing their families, both human and canine.

Hats off to Raeli—possibly the only Chinese Crested serving her country in the military.

—Sue Klinckhardt-Gardner,
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