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Topaz Spirits

Summer Musings and a Sopabox

Meet Miss Amber!



This is going to be a very different newsletter ... soapbox time. Last weekend, we adopted a young dog on death row in a Kentucky shelter (we live in Tennessee). A friend alerted us to her plight and she came to live with us ... sight unseen. She's a sweetie as you can see and we named her Amber ... she's a pitbull. Only being with us a week, she is already wrapping us around her little paw! She's about a year old and is recovering from a case of mange and a bit of malnutrition, but I swear has already added 5 lbs. She is elated to be able to run and play and loves all of the animals in our home ... we insist that we won a lottery! So given this, let me tell you about the rest of the household.

Miss Amber on Arrival

Meet Miss Coco

This is Coco ... I found her on a 96 degree day as I was driving home. There was a tight curve in the road ahead, so I had slowed down and noticed this tiny brown something crossing the road and collapsing in the grass. I stopped the car and went over to her and as she looked into my eyes and I recognized that she was a brown puppy ... and not just a puppy, but a pitbull puppy. But when her eyes locked onto mine, I was in love ... totally in love. Within half an hour, I had her to the vet for a check-up. She was malnourished, full of worms, sunburnt and scared ... and 5 weeks old. The picture on the left is her when we found her and her the one on the right shows her now ... a truly amazing, dynamic, intelligent, loving and wonderful dog.



Miss Coco Before and After

Meet Miss Ginger



This is Ginger who like Coco, was turned out by her owners. Another lady found Ginger as a pup, walking along the road, and took her into the pound. Ginger was about 2 months old when she came to live with us. She was fostered by a local pet store who nursed her through parvo and did some of her early training. Note that this pet store did not sell the dogs and cats they fostered ... this was their way of helping the pound and all adoptions were through the pound. Coco and Ginger became fast friends, but where Coco is perpetual energy, Ginger is sedate and comfortable on the couch. She's a Plott hound-basset-Shar-Pei mix and has the blue spotted tongue to prove it. And she has never met a can of dog food she didn't like.

Miss Ginger striking a pose ...

Loeleobobo of the Rich and Famous Bobeos

Then there's Leo, who was abandoned by his mom-cat when he was 5 weeks old. He and his siblings were "dropped off" at the same pet store that fostered Ginger with a note that the people couldn't care for these kittens ... and that's how we ended up with Leo. The pet store people encourage the customers to pick up and play with the animals and with Leo, it was love at first sight. Leo is a cat's cat and epitomizes "catitude". He's the alpha cat and the dogs are his too. A proper cat has to have servants.



Leo on his throne ...

Barry White (AKA Rare Bear)



Bear in a box ...

Bear was a work "drop off" ... some "kind" person left him in the parking lot at work in February. Bear is a special needs cat in that he has bad allergies (ulcerative rashes) and needed a steroid shot every other month until he got a urinary tract blockage and spent 8 days in kitty intensive care ... and the vets discovered a heart murmur. Bear is about 3 years old and was very healthy before the shots. So he's successfully on Transfer Factor (and our vets are believers in Transfer Factor now!) with no outbreaks in 6 months and counting! Bear has more curiosity than any cat ought to have and tries to outdo Leo in the catitude department ... and has written a short book, available on

request.

Tasha (AKA Miss Tosh)

Tasha was one of the kittens born to three female cats living between the office buildings where I worked in Florida. The mom cats were loving to their broods and raised them in large, communal litters. The attorney in the next building (who fostered many cats and kittens for the local shelter) helped me catch all the kittens and together, we found homes for them. Tasha and her brother Vic (who passed about 2 years ago) came to live with us. Tasha is our "alert kitty" ... through several bad situations, she has come to get either my husband or me – like when my husband was near to having a heart attack, she woke me up and would not stop meowing until I came downstairs to check on him. And that's not her only save, but it is one near and dear to me!



Miss Tosh looking regal ... you may kiss my paw ...

Smoky (AKA Itty-Bit)



Itty Bit relaxing ...

And last, but not least, there's Smoky who also was a feral cat in Florida. Her young mother (actually a kitten herself) raised her and her sister in a burrow outside the office and then abandoned them to their own devices. The postman, a gentle soul, took her sister and Smoky came home with us. She is loving but reclusive and is my kitty ... totally, 1000%. She's a little bit of a thing (her official nickname is "Itty Bit") and she loves a lap when she's in the mood and usually if I'm knitting all by myself.

What you can do ...

Like I said, this is a soapbox newsletter. Every time I think about Amber being on death row, waiting, not getting her mange treated (why bother?), waiting for someone to offer her a forever home, I sob. Our friend had sent out the email about her to many and I emailed and called only to be told that she was being fostered by someone in Kentucky. My dear husband was working behind the scenes and called the shelter and said he was ready to adopt on the spot, sight unseen. The Amber (her shelter name was Brownie) email got 1000 responses ... and we ended up with her! She is a blessing, like all of our wonderful animals!



Puppy Coco

And interestingly, there is a thread of unhappiness with all these dogs and cats, but in every case, there were angels who helped them to get to their "forever homes"!

There are so many animals like Amber and Coco and Ginger and the cats ... if you can find it in your heart to adopt one (and I know many of you out there are proud "parents" of cast-offs that you love dearly!), adopt, but there are many other things to help as well:

1. If you can't offer a permanent home, be a foster-owner ... that start of re-establishing trust in people goes a long way to helping a scared and lost cat or dog.
2. Volunteer at your local shelters if you can ... or support them by bringing them a 25 lb sack of dog or cat food once in a while ... or contribute money.
3. Support legislation to ban the sale of dogs and cats in pet stores. Cities like Albuquerque have done this and virtually shut down the puppy mill trade in the area, dramatically *increased* their shelter adoption rate and substantially *reduced* their euthanasia rate.
4. Spay or neuter all your pets. Not only are you keeping the cat and dog population down, but you reduce the "wanderlust" of your pet as well any aggression associated with breeding.
5. Actively oppose breed specific legislation. It's interesting as published statistics show that in areas where there is breed specific legislation, there has been no reduction in the number or severity of dog bites! *Punish the deed, not the breed.* And know that the humans that selectively bred aggressive animals and further trained the dogs to be aggressive are the guilty ones ... the Michael Vicks of the world need to be stopped.
6. Love a pitbull today (Coco and Amber added that one!)

Now, if you can take a few more moments, watch this short clip:

<http://www.dogwork.com/feeling/>

And here are a few good websites on pitbulls, on Transfer Factor and the good work my friend in Kentucky

does:

<http://www.pitbulllovers.com/>

<http://www.workingpitbull.com/>

<http://www.lawdogsusa.org/home.html>

<http://www.pitbullsontheweb.com/petbull/legislation.php>

http://www.terrificpets.com/dog_breeds/american_pit_bull_terrier.asp

http://www.bestfriends.org/nomorehomelesspets/pit_bulls.cfm

<http://www.shirleys-wellness-cafe.com/index.html>

<http://www.projectpitbull.org/>

And with that, I've officially gone to the dogs ... hehehe! Have a wonderful rest of the summer, stay cool and may blessings abound for you!

Jan

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