

Uniquely Akita

Serving the Mid-Atlantic states for nearly 30 years through education, support, and rescuing wonderful Akitas that would otherwise be euthanized in area shelters.

May/June 2014

Featured Orphan

Aja is adjusting to life in a home after years of being kenneled and bred for puppies.

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An Akita made national news after finding and mothering a tiny kitten.

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Featured Orphan: Aja

By Aaron and Katie Hoskins

Aja had the misfortune of being born into a puppy mill. Most likely she was bred starting from her first heat. We can't say for sure how many litters Aja has had in her 6 years, but it's definitely more than one. Shortly after Aja had her last litter of five puppies, the owner of the puppy mill died. A total of 13 Akitas, including Aja and her puppies, were turned over to a West Virginia animal shelter. ARMAC performed an evaluation of the Akitas, made recommendations to the shelter, and arranged for Aja and her puppies to move into an experienced foster home. Aja and the puppies did very well; Aja enjoyed a spa day and her puppies played with the resident male Akita. Eventually the puppies were weaned and it was time for three of them to go to their forever homes.



Aja is great with people, but she does take awhile to warm up to other animals. It's not too surprising since the only interaction she probably had with other dogs at the puppy mill was when it was time to conceive. She is a very sweet girl, and a bit on the anxious side. Aja is slowly adjusting to her crate training; she caterwauled quite a bit in her first few days. What

she really craves is to be with people and she loves to go for walks.

Aja is incredibly bright and talented, learning to sit on command in 2 days. She escaped her crate on the second night and managed to open a sliding door in the bathroom attached to the laundry room, where two 28 pound bags of dog food and a 20 pound bag of flour were being stored. Needless to say, she kept herself busy between the flour, dog food, and assorted cardboard boxes. Thankfully, she only ate until she was full and did not consume more than a couple of pounds, although we watched her very carefully that day.

Aja's puppy bearing days are now behind her and she would love to be your companion. Aja deserves her happily ever after and we look forward to seeing her settled in her forever home.

— Look for next month's article on Pokey's connection to Aja and her puppies.

Yearly Warm Weather Caution

By Jodi Marcus

Dogs do not sweat like humans; they have a few sweat glands on their feet and pant to reduce their body temperature, which means it is much easier for them to suffer heat exhaustion or heat stroke than humans. The more humid it is, the less your dog is able to cool himself and more likely to suffer from a heat related illness. Our Akitas have heavy double coats, even in the summer, which can also increase the chances of heat problems.

The best time to walk your dog is in the early morning or late evening. Once higher temperatures become constant, the longest walk should be done in the early morning, as the air and ground are at their coolest. The hours between 10 am and 3 pm are when the sun is at its most intense and should be avoided as much as possible. The earth absorbs the sun's heat and then reflects it back up, which means if it is 80 degrees at your head, it could be 100 degrees at your feet. Avoid asphalt as much as possible; its dark color absorbs much more heat than cement or grass. Dark colored dogs overheat more quickly than light colored ones; they absorb more heat because of their color.

Familiarize yourself with the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Below are two websites with excellent information about heat exhaustion and heat stroke, both of which are medical emergencies. We strongly recommend you keep the information in a readily accessible place, such as your refrigerator. We also included a place to write down your primary and emergency vet phone numbers.

**http://www.petmd.com/dog/conditions/cardiovascular/c_dg_heat_stroke

**<http://www.today.colostate.edu/story.aspx?id=8872>

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Signs of Heat Exhaustion

Heavy panting

Huffing and puffing or gasping for air

Begins to weave when walking due to dizziness

Lies down or collapses and cannot get up

Becomes unconscious

Mentally dazed

Vomiting

Muscle cramps (seizure-like tremors)

Abnormally rapid heartbeat and rapid breathing

Muscle weakness

Primary Vet #: _____

Emergency Vet #: _____

Signs of Heat Stroke

Rapid or erratic heartbeat/pulse

Rapid breathing, or struggling for breath

Exaggerated, loud, increased, heaving, irregular panting, or the sudden stopping of panting

Very high body temperature (normal is 100°F to 102.5°F)

Excessive drooling, or frothing at the mouth

Dark red gums or vomiting

Barking or whining

Anxious, vacant, or staring expression

Dizziness or confusion

Listlessness, weakness, or incoordination (stumbling and/or trouble standing or walking)

Shaking or seizures

Collapse or unconsciousness

A Note From Puller Lanigan

Dear Friends,

In April we had a situation that I would truly like to avoid in the future, if at all possible. I understand that we all lead busy lives and that while some people can handle actively rescuing animals, some cannot. But rescue doesn't begin and end with direct animal contact; there are many aspects to a successful rescue and we need your help to make ARMAC more successful.

A local shelter notified ARMAC of an 8 year old, male Akita surrendered by its owner on April 5th. With my new job that has a longer driving distance, I am unable check on dogs in Maryland shelters during the week and can only go on weekends. When I told the shelter I could not get to the shelter that immediate weekend due to a prior rescue commitment, the shelter said they would contact me after the weekend if Smokey was still available, as he wasn't immediately put on the list to be euthanized.

In the meantime, Smokey's plight was shared with other Akita rescues, but everyone wanted to know what WE thought of him. After the shelter notified me the following week of Smokey's continued availability, arrangements were made for me to visit over Easter weekend. Smokey is a lovely dog but **very** heartbroken at being dumped at the shelter. I took photos, went home, and put the photos and my write-up online: Facebook, rescue lists, etc. Many people said, "Save him! Save him!," but nobody stepped forward to adopt, foster, or help in his rescue. We are full (15 Akitas at the time of this writing), Big East Akita Rescue (BEAR) had just taken in 6 dogs in one week, and Akita Rescue Society of Florida has more than 40 Akitas in their kennel. We don't have a kennel, so we must pay to board those dogs not in foster homes, as many of you who so generously donate know. Plus, we are boarding too many Akitas already.

Smokey sat quietly on our Facebook page, being pushed further and further from notice with all the new Akitas that were dumped in shelters on the Eastern seaboard. Here was a modern day Hachiko pining for his owner and yet nobody was stepping forward to help him. Joann Dimon of BEAR, who has a very soft spot for older Akitas, had been monitoring Smokey and asked what was going on with him. I told her if she would take Smokey, then ARMAC would pull and board him until she could arrange transport to her location in New Jersey. As all the core ARMAC supporters (me, Jodi, Lisa, Aaron, and Katie) were unavailable due to conflicting personal reasons or prior rescue commitments, we put out an email plea for emergency transport and received three offers of assistance.

The situation then became a bit more complicated, as the kennel owner Stacy was unavailable between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. due to a previous rescue commitment with a different organization. That unfortunately eliminated two of the three parties, although they still offered to try to rearrange their schedules if no one else came forward to help. The third individual, who does not even own Akitas, said she would get Smokey on Friday. She had to drive a great distance to the shelter to pick him up and somehow in all the flying emails she didn't receive the one mentioning Smokey's kennel cough. When she arrived at the shelter and discovered Smokey was still ill, she did not feel comfortable exposing her two senior dogs to kennel cough, so she left Smokey behind. She was very apologetic and terribly upset over this, but couldn't take the risk that Smokey was still contagious. So now Smokey still had to be out of the shelter by Saturday and we had no transport whatsoever arranged for him.

This is where I got a bit perturbed and thought to myself that there has to be a better way than calling people at the last minute begging for help. Not only does that consume our time, especially when we have other immediate rescue commitments, but it is a very unsustainable way to manage a rescue organization. During my long drive with a different ARMAC orphan, I contemplated how each and every one of our adopters could possibly help rescue. Jodi and I try to have lives in addition to rescue; lives that include jobs, families, and pets of our own. While rescue has been extremely rewarding over the years, who can we turn to for help in getting things done for ARMAC if Jodi or I have an emergency? While there is a core group of faithful helpers, they too have lives and sometimes are just not available either.

— Continued on Page 4.

A Note From Puller Lanigan (Continued)

ARMAC has former adopters who are fabulous about supporting the rescue through donations, for which we are very grateful. That being said, our former adopters can help the rescue continue its mission of helping Akitas in the Mid Atlantic region in a variety of other ways. So here is my proposal: if every person who has ever adopted a dog from us would commit to one day or weekend per month, then ARMAC would be much more effective at rescuing Akitas and more likely to survive the eventual change in leadership. Not to mention that always having someone to rely on would greatly reduce our stress levels! We know you all have lives too, but donating a day here and there is not going to wreak havoc with your social lives. It WILL, however, give you a certain sense of satisfaction that you have made the difference in or even helped save a dog's life. There is no feeling in the world to equal that!

Never forget this: if someone had not taken the time to foster, transport, or work with YOUR beloved Akita, you might not have him or her right now. So help someone else find their forever dog by helping ARMAC in one or more of the following ways:

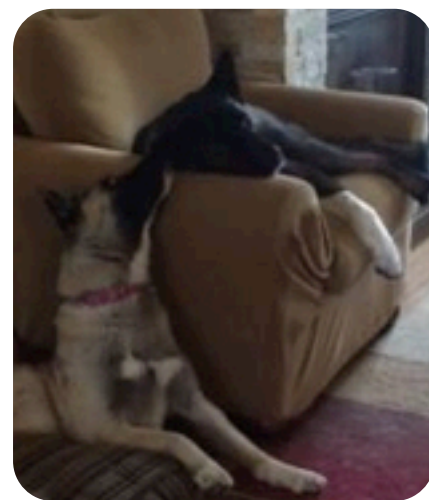
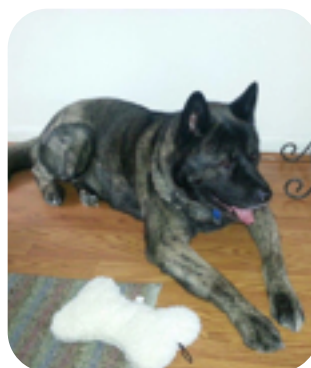
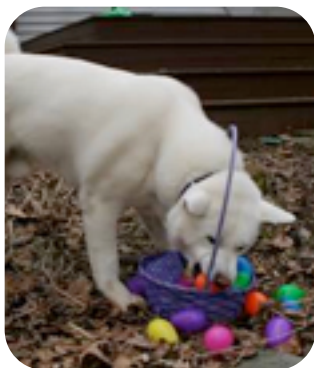
- Transport of Akitas, emergency or otherwise
- Tagging along for housechecks and learning how ARMAC evaluates prospective adopters
- Setting up and/or breaking down booths at adoption events (Reston Pet Fiesta, Dulles Pet Expo, etc.)
- Participating in adoption events — it's an opportunity to show off your wonderful Akita, share your adoption experience, and be an ambassador for the breed
- Visiting those dogs being boarded at the kennel — they would love to be brushed, walked, and loved on! It kills me to think of Sugar & Spice, Lincoln, Minnie and so many more, sitting day after day in the kennel with their regular time out and nobody coming to visit them. Take a friend; they might meet their next canine companion.

Oh, and what became of Smokey? After learning that nobody had stepped forward to save Smokey after the three offers fell through, the kennel owner Stacey, who does not have Akitas or any special interest in Akitas, drove 80 miles one way to the shelter at 4:00 p.m., after spending her entire day at an adoption event in addition to caring for the many dogs at her kennel. Stacey didn't arrive until 6:30 p.m., which was after the shelter officially closed. Luckily, the shelter staff was willing to stay and wait for her just to see Smokey get to safety. Stacey didn't get home until 9:00 p.m. that night. Stacey loves all dogs, but this was above and beyond any expectation. If ARMAC can get more volunteers on a regular basis, this may not have to happen again. And that depends on you, our adopters.

Postcards From Home

From left to right:

Cole celebrating Easter,
Baby looking absolutely fantastic with a fuller coat,
Chazzie chilling in his new home, and
Honey making sure **Raiden** (fka Ranger) is still in the chair.



How to Include Your Dog in Your Wedding (Part II)

By Aaron and Katie Hoskins

Now that we have covered the logistics part of the different possibilities of where to hold the event so that your Akita can be there, let us move on to the more fun topic of how to really include your Akita in your wedding. After all, it is great for them to be there, but they are more than just a regular member of the family and deserve some special recognition. A very natural choice is for your dog to be the ring bearer. (Insert picture of E.V. with rings attached) E.V. was the ring bearer at our wedding, but we did receive one word of advice from a friend. She had gone to a wedding where the dog was the ring bearer and rather than tying the rings to the collar, they placed them in little pouches on the collar which was fine until the dog got to the alter, shook, sent the rings flying, and had the best man scrambling to find find the rings. (We risked it by attaching the rings to a flower arrangement on her leash.) The other piece of advice from our own experience is to try to make sure that there are no cats hanging around the site of the ceremony; E.V. was a good girl and only stared at the cat, but her attention was definitely focused elsewhere.

We are not religious, so we tweaked a poem called "How Falling in Love is like Owning a Dog" by Taylor Mali that we each spoke for the reading.



One of Katie's friends sent a photo she'd found online of a couple's engagement photo consisting of their hands and their dog's paw. We decided to take a picture of our hands with E.V.'s paw (hers being on top was the easiest way to do it), since getting custom printed cards is relatively inexpensive and there are dozens of companies to choose from. The wedding cake was one of the areas where we were really able to include E.V. as a part of our day. We went with cream cheese frosting which E.V. approved of and we had a cake topper custom made to include her. There are multiple websites out there where artists can be found to make custom items for you and cake



toppers have a lot of choices. Basically, if you can imagine it, you can probably find someone who is willing and able to do it for you. Instead of a guestbook, we had a "fingerprint tree" for guests to ink their fingers and sign their names. We had a lot of fun getting E.V.'s paw print in just the right spot on the tree. The one thing that we had thought about doing, but were unable to do was to get a recording of E.V.'s "woo-woo-woo" and have the sound pattern engraved into the inside of the wedding band. Finding someone to do the engraving was not a problem, but getting E.V. to woo when we were ready to record was something that never worked out.

We are very happy that we were able to include E.V. in our special day as much as we were able to and hopefully this article gives you some ideas if you find yourself wanting to include your Akita in your special day. Also, we know that what we did was not all inclusive, so please feel free to share your own experiences on the ARMAC Facebook page.

One last word of advice: be prepared for the challenges of "uncooperative" dogs when it comes to pictures. Hilarity just might ensue! (And yes, that is E.V. grooming herself while we were attempting to take a photo of the entire bridal party!)



Yearly Warm Weather Caution Cont'd

Never leave your dog unattended in the car. Like dark dogs, dark cars heat up more quickly than light colored ones. The metal beds of pick-up trucks heat up rapidly, especially if they have a black liner or covering. Pick-up trucks with cabs are not much better unless the covered part is air-conditioned. A crate or other transport type box in the pick-up bed does not really provide any relief from the heat. Look at the chart to the right to see just how quickly the temperature rises in a vehicle.

Chart source: <https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/pets-in-vehicles.aspx>

Elapsed time	Outside Air Temperature (F)					
	70	75	80	85	90	95
0 minutes	70	75	80	85	90	95
10 minutes	89	94	99	104	109	114
20 minutes	99	104	109	114	119	124
30 minutes	104	109	114	119	124	129
40 minutes	108	113	118	123	128	133
50 minutes	111	116	121	126	131	136
60 minutes	113	118	123	128	133	138
> 1 hour	115	120	125	130	135	140



AJA: One of two females rescued from a backyard breeder in WV. She is friendly with people, but wary of other dogs at this time. She is also quite petite.



APOLLO: This handsome fellow is eager for attention and loves to go for walks! Apollo is good with children and small dogs.



LINCOLN: A little shy about meeting new people after being adopted twice from the shelter, he lived with and enjoys children.

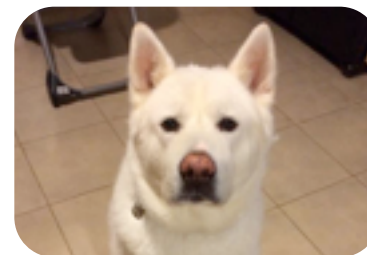


MINNIE MOUSE: One of two females rescued from a backyard breeder in WV. She is a sweet and mini-sized Akita at 50 pounds.

Available



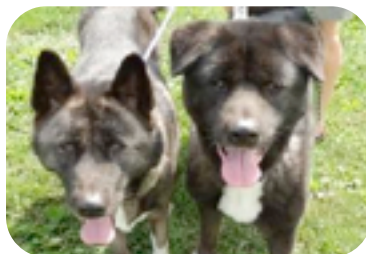
Orphans



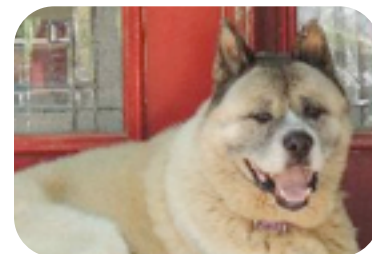
RAYO: Given up by an active duty military couple unable to take him with them, Rayo is a big boy who has been around cats and children.



RIKA & SHINJU: A bonded mom and daughter pair, Rika and Shinju are currently undergoing treatment for heartworm.



SUGAR & SPICE: A bonded, elderly pair of sisters, these girls are incredibly sweet. They need a home with no small child home due to their age and age-related physical condition (weak hips, hocks).



ZACH: Zach has arthritis in his knees, although it only seems to affect his gait. He is still able to take half mile walks with no ill effects.

In Appreciation

Your donations aid the boarding, transportation, registration fees, and medical care (routine and emergency) for all rescued Akitas, along with supporting the continued operations of Akita Rescue Mid-Atlantic Coast. A hearty thank you from us all!

Andrew Warren

Kevin Lanigan

Caralyn Bushey

Noelle Elsberry

Cynthia Clarke

R. Lee Harvey & Family

David Hawkins

Rachel West

Debora Geckle

Rebecca Manners

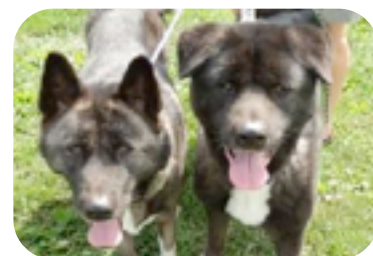
Gordon Dreher

Shelly Keyes

Jennifer Yuhas

Steven Davis and Eleanor Lewis

John Washington



Sugar and Spice send you lots of kisses and wishes for a forever home!

Akita Finds and Mothers Unweaned Kitten

"They're just two peas in pod, those two," the animals' owner, Lorrie Rivera, of Hollywood, Fla., told GoodMorningAmerica.com of the unlikely pair. Rivera and her faithful guard dog, Lily, 10, whom her daughter gave to her as a puppy to help provide security at their flower shop during a string of break-ins, found the tiny, abandoned kitten on April 8 during their daily walk to the park. "We walked down the path a little bit and Lily just lunged into the brush and came up with kitten in her mouth," Rivera, 60, explained. "I scooped it up right away and we brought it home." The kitten, too young for the Humane Society to take in for adoption, has found a new temporary home with Lily, who has been mothering and protecting the fragile feline like one of her own. "They're just really adorable together. It's so cute," Rivera said of the newfound four-legged friends.



Just remember that not all Akitas are kitty friendly! Article source: <http://abcn.ws/1IZ5DpZ>

Past Events

Thanks to everyone who helped and visited ARMAC's booth at the annual Reston Pet Fiesta at the Reston Town Center on Saturday, May 3rd. The puppies were very popular!

ARMAC Board

Puller Lanigan

puller@akitarescue.org

Jodi Marcus

jodi@akitarescue.org

Betty McDade

Lisa Gray

lisa@akitarescue.org

President

(301) 680 - 0788

Adoption Coordinator

(703) 730 - 0844

Public Support

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We want to hear from you!



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May/June 2014

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