Remembering a Founder

By Elizabeth Sommers

Peppertree recently lost one of our founding Board members, one of the five people who gathered, on a very snowy day, late in 1998 to brainstorm this quirky, multi-purpose rescue organization.

On February 1st, Karolyn Buttle lost her long, and fiercely fought, battle with cancer. She was so very young (only 51) and beautiful, both in person and in spirit. It’s hard to process, even though we all knew that her time was imminent.

In addition to helping tremendously with the work and organization of Peppertree, Karolyn’s “enchanted cottage” on Beebe Pond, in Caanan, New York, welcomed many foster dogs and significantly became one of the very vital stops along the road of recovery for a series of super-shy intakes. We learned by accident that it helped these very wary dogs to go to a series of homes, in each of which they were treated with love and laughter. Eventually, with the help of secure resident dogs, they would learn that it was safe to trust people. Many miracles of emotional “birth” took place out on Beebe Pond.

Karolyn also, very bravely, hosted several Peppertree picnics at The Pond, which were the best of our too-few social events and led to many wonderful memories. Specifically, barbequing under the umbrellas, a series of dogs deciding her flower beds were truly meant to be *beds,* furry frisbee tournaments, and, one year, the best mud puddle ever!

Karolyn, with her ready smile and instant empathy, added immeasurably to our organization’s spirit and to our vocabulary! The Peppertree word “Hee whackity” became, and still is, our cheer when something good happens. It’s been touching and quite fun to watch new volunteers pick up that cry, having no idea of its origin, and probably carrying it over into other areas of their lives. I’m waiting for the day that it hits some dictionary of modern idiom and we will see to it that she’s properly credited. There were many other verbal quirks and creations from her throughout the years. I wish I’d kept a list and perhaps we can compile one in her memory. Every one of her unique word-arrangements carried her whimsical, quirky, gentle and insightful spirit.

Karolyn even came up with the perfect term for that most astonishing, unnerving aspect of rescue work: something she christened the “rescue non-coincidence.” Every rescuer knows those seemingly random, illogical series of events that occur, which turn out to be so fitting and right for the people and dogs involved that it’s almost magical or, more accurately, convinces you that there truly is some greater power stepping in on occasion to intervene on behalf of these innocent and precious lives. As we should have expected, Karolyn’s passing was marked by a genuine rescue non-coincidence.

For the last several years, she has had two dogs as her chief companions: Peyton, a sturdy, spirited survivor of early abuse who came to us in a slightly odd way (helping out a sister rescue). He was initially adopted by a wonderful man who also passed away far too early, and when he returned, there was a vacancy at Beebe Pond. I’ll confess to a little maneuvering and
gentle arm-twisting to get him out there, and I never regretted it for an instant. And EmilyAnne, one of the “Bouvadors” (an accidental Bouvier/Labrador litter we got 10 years ago), a quirky giant whom Karolyn gentled and entranced.

Of course, Karolyn had made plans for them and each had a home waiting for them when the time came. During the last days of her illness, however, it became clear that they had come to rely on one another so much that we should really try to find them a home together. We were particularly concerned about EmilyAnne, as she had never lived anywhere else or with anyone else and seemed increasingly dependent on Peyton. Word went out and all sorts of options were being explored by a wide network of her friends.

On the evening of January 31st, after Karolyn had gone to sleep for the evening, EmilyAnne took the decision out of our hands. She collapsed at the house and, on being taken to the Animal Emergency Room, she was found to have liver cancer and massive internal bleeding. The decision was made to let her go to the Rainbow Bridge to end her suffering, but most of us knew that in truth EmilyAnne had simply gone ahead to be there to greet Karolyn, who followed less than 12 hours later. It was a gift to all of us as well, to know that neither of them would be alone.

Godspeed to a very special and unique person. It is so very hard to say goodbye.

A website has been established at www.caringbridge.org/visit/karolynbettle where friends can leave their thoughts and all can enjoy the photo gallery, with several images of our beautiful friend.
On Sunday, March 1st a warm crowd of Friends of Peppertree – adopters, volunteers, animal lovers in general, and fans of great food and drink – gathered at Mexican Radio in Hudson, NY. Owners Lori Selden and Mark Young, who added lucky Peppertree dog Alma to their family last summer, very generously donated 25% of the day and evening’s proceeds to our cause. This amounted to a whopping $2,000.00. For most of the month of February, colorful dog-themed cutouts were sold for $1 each, personalized by the purchaser and then displayed on the bright walls of Mexican Radio. Heartfelt thanks, for which there really aren’t words, go to Lori and Mark, managers Miriam and Matt, and all the friendly and capable hostesses, servers and bartenders. Also, for helping produce the $1 cutouts: volunteer Sandy Graves, the Zink Family, St. George Preschool and from Orenda Elementary in Clifton Park Ms Delmerico’s first grade class, and Ms Brosnan and Ms Gwiazdowski’s second grade classes.

If ever on Warren Street in Hudson or Cleveland Place in New York City, stop in at Mexican Radio and sample out-of-this-world meals and Margaritas!

www.mexrad.com
Meet: Patrice O’Connor

Occupation: Management Analyst with NYS Department of Public Service

Volunteer Location: Clifton Park, NY

How long have you been volunteering with Peppertree?

Four and a half years!

What is your Volunteer Role(s) within Peppertree?

I’m the volunteer coordinator helping new people come into the organization; I place the new people with the right, qualified foster families. I also place foster families with the right dogs!

How/Why did you come to be a Peppertree Volunteer?

I got involved with Peppertree in 2008 when a friend of mine was trying to help a family of dogs and needed help. I joined the Peppertree Foster with the idea that I could help, but it ended up helping me as much as it helped them.

What is your favorite activity to do with your dogs?

I love to take long walks in the woods and watch my dogs run free. I also enjoy playing with them in the backyard and seeing their funny faces.

What is the most challenging aspect of being a Peppertree Volunteer?

The most challenging aspect is seeing the dogs that have been abandoned by their owners and are now in need of a loving home.

What are some of the highlights you’ve experienced as a Peppertree Volunteer?

One of the highlights is seeing the look of happiness on the faces of the dogs when they find their forever homes. It’s rewarding to know that I’m helping to make a difference in their lives.

Holiday Appeal, A Raving Success!

By Lucia Perfetti Clark

It’s no breaking news story that the US economy is not doing very well these days. Peppertree knows this first hand, as we have had some owner turn-ins related to people losing their jobs and not being able to afford to care for their dogs anymore.

So as annual practice, we draft the letter for this year’s Holiday Appeal. We had realistic expectations that perhaps this year people would not be able to give as generously as they had in the past. However, upon the recommendation of our printer Karl Stewart at Graphic Printing, we did include a return slip, which he said may help increase our response rate.

We are happy to report that not only did we collect the largest amount of money ever for the Holiday Appeal, our response rate was better than ever, six percent of those who were sent a letter returned it with a donation, where as most not for profits hope for a three to five percent return rate. This really speaks to the generosity of the network of people who keep Peppertree going. Donations that can be directly linked to the Holiday Appeal letter totaled at $3,490, and the total amount of donations that occurred during the holiday period including ones related to the letter. December through January was approximately $21,502. This money allowed Peppertree to once again settle the very large medical bill accumulated during the year at Shaker Veterinary Hospital. It also allows us to continue the important work of rescuing dogs in need, and being able to take in those who have a good temperament, regardless of the cost of the care they may need prior to being adopted out.

To those who donated, Peppertree thanks you, and the dogs (past, present, and future) thank you. To those who wanted to donate but were unable to this year, we understand that it has been a difficult year for everyone, we appreciate your support in the past and we hope you can find it in yourself to support us once again.

To those who were unable to donate this year, we encourage you to consider a donation to your local animal shelter. Even the smallest donation can make a big difference in the lives of animals in need.

Tully’s Many Talents

By Tully’s Mom

Sniff sniff sigh. Huff... huff... [a few seconds later] joke... huff... huff... sigh [a few seconds pass] slap... slap...

My mornings begin without a blaring alarm clock. Instead, a cool wet nose finds my ear, neck, or a bare arm or foot. If I am not quick enough, the licking begins. Ignoring him results in Tally puffing onto the bed, cats hurrying in various directions, escape, bewildered by the invasion of the big red hound. If this maneuver doesn’t work the household, my husband’s response does: “Tully! GET DOWN!!”

My daughter Hannah, 2 ½, adores the foster dogs who spend days, weeks, or months with us. We teach these dogs home guidelines such as “leave the cats alone” and “do your business outside.” Some of our furry visitors had never been hugged, loved, groomed or fed daily. Others are geographical victims – slated for euthanasia because they are southern-bred. Still others are victims of the sinking economy, given up by fearful owners who cannot afford veterinary costs and dog food. A few are picked up as strays and unclaimed by owners. Tully belonged to that group. All arrive in our house bewildered, wide-eyed, tentative; temporary guests until forever families are found.

We lavish them with love; feed, groom, and walk them. We also begin to teach them to live indoors with other animals and provide obedience training. Our house is one of many intermediate havens, halfway between shelter and permanency. Some of our foster dogs have never navigated stairs. Others haven’t experienced the hazards of linoleum floors, or been exposed to a haven’t experienced the hazards of linoleum floors, or been exposed to a

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Both his energy and enthusiasm surpass his focus – he’s still a very young hound. Even though we have plenty of experience with dogs, we’ve concluded that Tully’s cast from a different mold – he’s a social butterfly, wrestling fanatic, and champion fence-hurdler all rolled into a sixty-pound, reddish-tan ball.

My husband recently started some basic training with Tully. His goal: to teach him to focus on following one scent to completion in order to become a search and rescue dog. No surprise that Tully has taken to it… enthusiastically. “He got from Point A to Point B,” my husband admitted, “It wasn’t perfect – he had to be redirected once or twice – but it was a good first track. And he loved it.”

Not all dogs get to live the exciting life of Tully, the redbone hound who has found his calling in life. We continue to foster, providing each Peppertree foster a second chance at a loving home. Truth be known: it also works off some of that endless hound energy as Tully chases the new guys around the yard, defending his title as doggy world wrestling champion.

Foster Homes Needed

Please consider opening up your heart and home to one of our dogs or puppies for a few days or weeks to give them a chance at a new life.

We have to turn away many animals in need because of a shortage of foster homes.

Most of our dogs are fostered before being placed, so if you own a Peppertree dog, your pet probably benefited from the kindness of one or multiple foster home volunteers.

Won’t you show another dog or pup the same kindness?

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A Rescue For Dogs Of Good Temperament