

Lethal Whites *across* USA



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SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO RIKU

October 2003

Welcome!

Who We Are...

Kathy Munie & Cyndi Cunico

SNAP & Aussielads Aussie Rescue

This issue is dedicated to Riku (Mr. Black), one of the 5 Lethal littermates who made the journey from Northern California to Phoenix, AZ in July, 2003. Riku crossed over the Rainbow Bridge on August 27, 2003.



To learn more about Kathy Munie and SNAP, please visit www.snap4thedogz.org

Aussielads Aussie Rescue!



To learn more about Cyndi Cunico and Aussielads Aussie Rescue, please visit www.aussielads.com.

Lethal Whites



SCRAPPY

A Misguided Journey

Cyndi Cunico

Aussielads Aussie Rescue



Scrappy is a deaf and vision-impaired Lethal, and while his story is sad, it is pretty typical of what can happen when an impaired dog ends up with either unknowledgeable or uncaring people. We were contacted in March of 2003 by a lady involved in a high dollar benefit, in charge of providing a purebred puppy to be sold at auction (past auctions netted \$5,000). This year she decided to find a purebred "pound puppy" because she wanted to help save an unwanted dog. As luck would have it, when she and a friend arrived at the pound, a lady was bringing in 2 Lethal Whites to drop off. At this point, we do not know what happened to Scrappy's littermate and we probably never will. We have come to uncover that many lies were told and we are not sure where the real truth lies. But here is what we do know.

Her reason for contacting us was to gather information about Lethals because she wanted to auction one at a benefit. I pleaded with her not to do that, explaining they need a special, caring home willing to work with

continued on page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1	Welcome! SCRAPPY – A Misguided Journey
2	5 Lethals from Northern California The Fly That Wasn't There
3	Contacts Across the USA SCRAPPY (continued from Page 1)
4	Tribute to Riku (Mr. Black)/ Meet Mr. Blue, Ms. Purple and Mr. Red
5	Albi (Mr. Green)/ Puppy Strangles/Toes' Story (circling behavior)
6	Toes' Story(continued)/Fionn's Story
7	Feedback/Information/Join Our Team

5 Lethals from N. California



Their Story...

We were contacted by a concerned neighbor on June 30, 2003 about 5 Lethal White pups (born to a litter of 10) who were going to be drowned on July 1st because they were not sold. The owner contacted the neighborhood man who kindly offers this service (for a price, of course) to drown the 7-week-old pups while she went on vacation. Sad...but true!

Thanks to the MANY wonderful people (especially Sue Swartz who got the pups), too numerous to mention (please visit www.aussielads.com/5_lethal_white_pups.htm for a complete list and all the details of their journey) we were able to intercede and prevent a horrific tragedy!

Jennifer Akins, the first foster mom, came up with the wonderful idea of buying each one a different color of collar and named them accordingly. So, we now had Mr. Black, Mr. Blue, Mr. Green, Mr. Red and Ms. Purple. Pretty ingenious, wasn't it?

Jan Hinkley (bringing along her Lethal, Phoenix) and friend Lisa, transported the pups from Garden Grove, CA (where her Mom, Pat graciously fostered them for 1 week) to Lorraine's house in Mesa, AZ.

Thanks to the 2 week leeway in fostering/transporting, we were able to solicit, receive and approve (including home checks) 2 very good foster homes for the pups, allowing each to foster their pup of choice! Please check our website for the latest updates on all the pups! ■

The Fly That Wasn't There

Cindi Shuler

Fionn's Mom

When reading Scrappy's story (on the website) it reminded me of when Fionn first arrived at my house. He was a phantom digger, fly catcher and pacer!

Fionn's behavior is worse in stressful situations, and when "really" stressed, I can't stop him. Until recently, I thought it was OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder), but the more I study it, the more I believe it is a seizure activity. I think we (me and the rescue person he came from) both felt it was OCD since Fionn was so neglected and abused. Although he has always loved people, Fionn has been abused enough to learn to "play dead" when he is in trouble. That is where the dog learns, through corrections or abuse, that no behavior relieves the pain, so they refuse to offer any behavior at all. When Fionn first came to live with me, he would do this anytime he thought he was in trouble, which was really almost anytime I interacted with him.

When I moved from Texas to California, a real stressful time for Fionn, his behavior increased to the point that I was afraid the other dogs would attack him. Fionn would pace, fly catch and dig right over the other dogs, as if they weren't even there. After really bad episodes, he would find a place to hide and no coaxing would bring him out until he was ready.

Looking back, I realize how much his behavior was more seizure-like than OCD, but then hindsight is 20/20! I handled it by keeping yummy smelling treats always on hand and waving them under his nose each time he had an episode. I had the most success with small bits of moist cat food and hamburger/steak. Fionn would stop his behavior long enough to eat the treat (unless it was a really bad episode) and we slowly worked up to him following me for a treat. I began feeding him each meal by hand, giving him someone to totally trust and have used dog massages to reduce stress. It has been almost a year since I got Fionn and I have worked on his behavior to the point that he now does herding, obedience and agility (see *Fionn's Story, page 6*). He still has moments where I see that "blank stare" in his eyes and he still fly catches, but not as much as he used to. ■

CONTACTS ACROSS THE USA!

Since the July issue, we have added many new contacts to our "Team". If you are interested in helping, please see page 7 for details. Listed alphabetically by state:

Arizona

Mesa, AZ Lorraine Ayres (480) 654-2354 Email: k9mom@cox.net

Mesa, AZ Cyndi & Dave Cunico (480) 755-3598 Email: Cyndi@cableaz.com

California

Lake Mathews, CA Megan Miller Email: collectinaussies@yahoo.com

San Francisco, CA Abbie Reiten Email: Reiten@sbcglobal.net

Monterey, CA Deb Sell (408) 460-9960 Email: drdeb@thegrid.net

Maine

Freyburg, MA Monique Kramer (207) 935-4093 Email: Marley@aol.com

Minnesota

Becker, MN Barbara Davis Email: wlf@execpc.com

Baudette, MN Maggie Evans Email: bigbanzai@yahoo.com

Missouri

St. Louis, MO Kathy Munie (314) 853-6542 Email: 4thedogz@sbcglobal.net

New Hampshire

Exeter, NH Debbie DiCicco Email: grahamsummer2002@yahoo.com

Texas

Austin & Central Texas Joann Starks Email: aussierescue@hotmail.com or jstarks@austin.rr.com

Utah

Kanab, UT Diane Young (435) 644-2835 Email: diane@expressweb.com

Orem, UT Melissa Zobell (801) 427-3067 Email: melissazobell@msn.com

Wisconsin

Baudette, MN Maggie Evans Email: bigbanzai@yahoo.com

their disabilities. I also offered to take the pup into our rescue, but she wouldn't hear of it. When I asked about his littermate, I was told that he/she was given away by the original owner at the pound. Days later, she told me he would **not** be up for auction because her friend fell in love with him and decided to keep him.

Several months later, Lorraine was contacted by Hilary, a lady in need of help with a Lethal. It turned out to be Scrapy; the Lethal from the pound who was given away, after only one day, by the lady who fell in love with him. We have reason to believe that his littermate was sold at auction, but have no proof. When Hilary's family got Scrapy, they were NOT told of his disabilities. Instead he was presented as a "top of the line breeding" and was worth \$500 (must be a rehearsed "auction intro"). This loving family had no prior Aussie experience and soon discovered that Scrapy was deaf. Hilary enrolled Scrapy in puppy and basic obedience classes, but the instructor could not provide effective training.

Due to her family situation (involving medical issues with her child), Hilary asked for help in finding Scrapy a new, loving home. Before we could help place him, she found him a new home where he had another dog to play with. He only lasted one day before the new home wanted to return him because he was too rough for their dog. We immediately sent out a plea over the US seeking a safe place for Scrapy because we had no space available. We were contacted by a lady from Chandler, AZ who offered to foster Scrapy.

Scrapy had been through so much and was quite stressed at his new foster home, which is understandable. He immediately began exhibiting a strange behavior of biting, pawing and barking at a "spot" on the ground. He continued doing this and could not be distracted, not even for food. A call to Hilary provided details about this behavior, which appear to surface when Scrapy is stressed.

An examination at Eye Care for Animals ruled out any eye problems as cause for this behavior. Scrapy is in foster care and he is showing signs of improvement. For details, visit www.aussielads.com/scrapy.htm ■

Tribute to Riku (Mr. Black)



Riku 5/24/03 – 8/27/03

Riku passed away the night of August 27, 2003 at the young age of 3 months old. A product of a Merle-to-Merle breeding of Australian Shepherds, Riku had many obstacles to overcome in his young life. Riku was completely deaf and blind, his little blue eyes were barely visible, and they were so tiny. He had no idea that he was impaired and was one very happy little boy. No challenge was too great for him; he simply put his little nose in the air and walked in his silent, dark world with a smile on his face. He just loved giving kisses and being held.

Riku was dearly loved and is sorely missed by his family (Charles and Dawn Visser and their 2 boys, Julius and Niklaas). Aiko (Lethal White) and Annabelle, his canine family, miss him too.

Riku had vomited once, earlier in the morning and was fine the remainder of the day. He vomited again around 6 p.m., followed by more vomit and diarrhea. He was immediately taken to the emergency animal hospital where they discovered that he had aspirated (inhaled his own vomit). Tests were run and no reason for the vomiting was discovered. The test results did show that his liver was enlarged and there is also the possibility of a damaged esophagus (which may explain why he inhaled his vomit), but without an autopsy, we will never be sure.

Please visit www.aussielads.com/mr_black.htm to read an email from Riku's Mom, Dawn Visser. A more loving, caring family we could not have found. Riku's short life was filled with more love than most ever find in an entire lifetime.

If you would like to donate to help other Lethals-In-Need in memory of Riku, please send your check to Aussielads Aussie Rescue, 926 W. Nido Avenue, Mesa, AZ 85210 (in memory of Riku).

Don't forget to check out Riku's littermates. ■

Aussielads Aussie Rescue

Mr. Blue aka Marco



Marco is totally blind and deaf, and quite an exceptional puppy. We nicknamed him Bumper because of his unique method of finding his way around. Visit www.aussielads.com/mr_blue.htm for all the details (and pictures) of this amazing puppy. ■

Ms. Purple aka Lyla



Ms. Purple is blind and deaf, but she is a typical Aussie with the "attitude" for success! She can be sassy and so full of herself, that she has her foster mom (Lorraine) talking to herself☺. Lyla is an absolute sweetheart and for all the details, please visit www.aussielads.com/ms_purple.htm ■

Mr. Red aka Mad Max



Mr. Red is completely deaf and vision impaired. He is the most "hyper" of all the pups and extremely energetic! Max is one of the lucky ones who got to go to a loving foster home, who could not give him up when we had a great interested adopter. He now is part of a very loving family (Amy and Randy Kettelhut). Please visit www.aussielads.com/mr_red.htm for details about this lucky pup! ■

Mr. Green aka Albi

Puppy Strangles



On August 23, 2003 Albi was taken to Best Friends Animal Hospital in Mesa, AZ for severe ear, face and neck swelling, as well as lesions on his ears. X-rays indicated that all tissue in his head was swollen and his ears were infected clear down to the ear canal. Albi had to be sedated before bloodwork and cultures could be taken due to the amount of pain he was experiencing. Antibiotic and steroids injections were administered.

Albi spent the night at the hospital and was released to Desarae and Chris, his foster parents, with medications and detailed instructions for his care. His bloodwork showed he was somewhat anemic and the cultures came back indicating a diagnosis of Puppy Strangles. The road to recovery for Albi has been a long one, but he is improving nicely. His second checkup resulted in additional medication due to the infection still present down in his ear canals. On his third visit, blood was drawn and ears looked clear, so no additional medication was required.

Albi's medical expenses to date are in the \$800 range and our Vet is "rescue friendly", offering discounts for in-house services. If you would like donate toward Albi's expenses, please send a check to Aussielads Aussie Rescue (ALBI), 926 W. Nido Avenue, Mesa, AZ 85210. For updates, please visit www.aussielads.com/mr_green.htm

Disclaimer

All content in this newsletter is provided solely to relate information obtained from experience, research and theories and should NOT be used as a means of diagnosis or treatment. Please consult your Veterinarian for all health, as well as behavioral issues (may be due to a medical problem). For pets with serious behavioral issues, please consult a professional for advice.

Puppy Strangles

Veterinary Information Services (1/9/97)

Puppy Strangles (Juvenile Cellulitis) is a misnamed disease suggesting respiratory difficulty. The term cellulitis more appropriately describes the condition. Usually puppies contract the condition early from 4 weeks to 4 months of age. There is no predisposition to breed or gender. Not all puppies are affected in the litter, but the entire litter can be involved. Early signs include redness around the outside of the ear, followed by draining tracts that can extend into the adjacent lymph nodes of the face and upper neck.

Toes' Story

Lorraine Ayres

(Proud to be) Toes' Mom

Toes came to us at the age of 7 weeks, thin and underfed, as well as deaf and blind. She was dumped at the pound and rescued by Debbie DiCicco (formerly of AAWL). Once home, I noticed a circling (spinning) behavior; my first reaction was a physical or mental problem. New to these disabilities, uncertain of my capabilities, I let instinct take over. When she circled, I stopped her, offering a more enticing diversion. She was scared and confused in her new surroundings; all I could offer was love and assurance. Sage was instrumental in our success.

Toes hated the kennel (she screamed and circled), so we potty-trained her by letting her sleep in bed with us, not without lack of sleep, but the screaming stopped. After months of observation and discussions with our Vet, we determined the circling behavior could most likely be attributed to lack of socialization with pups and humans. When kenneled, her circling increased, similar to animals caged for long periods of time, i.e. in zoos. Puppy biting was also an issue; her bite was strong and she had not learned when to let go!

Over the months, when Toes circled we would immediately stop her and divert her attention by interacting with her. We would give her kisses and lots of love and direct her focus elsewhere. The incidents became less frequent and would only surface when she was stressed and eventually stopped completely. We moved when Toes was 9 months old and although the move was very stressful for everyone, Toes never exhibited the circling behavior.

continued on page 6

Toes, now 2 years old, loves to climb on the patio furniture and curl up on the plastic chairs. She has an amazing sense of balance and steps from chairs to table and back again. She also enjoys leaping over a small brick wall in the yard, never missing her mark. Toes was taught to swim, always knowing where the steps are and enjoys teaching the foster pups, many blind and deaf just like her.

All of the Lethals, some blind and deaf, who came to our rescue either directly from the breeder or a home environment in which they were socialized, never showed any signs of circling.

Since I do not know Toes "history" before she came to us, I can only guess she was kenneled and isolated from her littermates as well as humans. I believe, if caught early enough, this behavior can be eliminated, although older dogs may revert back when stressed. If this behavior is stopped (by diverting positive focus elsewhere) immediately and consistently EVERY time it is exhibited, I believe it can be eliminated. ■

Fionn's Story

Cindi Shuler
Fionn's Mom



Fionn, a "Lethal White" with a smidge of red merle color on his nose and ear, entered my life in November of 2002 when I adopted him from **Joann Starks of Aussie Rescue in Texas**. He had been abused (emotionally and physically) prior to Joann

saving him from death, and had no idea how to interact with dogs, toys or much of his environment. He would fly catch and phantom dig, had separation anxiety, is deaf, and of course, has to be careful of the sun due to the lack of pigment in his sensitive blue eyes. Maybe he didn't sound like the perfect dog, but he was to me.

Trust was the first thing Fionn needed to learn. While working on gaining his trust (and stopping his counter surfing), my other dogs were busy teaching him doggie manners. Fionn did not know how to interact with other dogs, so he had many things to learn; not to steal, the meaning of a curled lip (since he couldn't hear them growl) and most important, the pack order. They taught him to play chase, roughhouse (until they knocked something over ☺) and tug-of-war.

Each dog in my life has a "doggie job", be it obedience, agility or Frisbee. Fionn began with basic obedience to help us communicate and build his confidence. His fly catching, phantom digging and nervous pacing slowly improved as his confidence grew. Each day, he worked for his breakfast and dinner. All meals were fed by hand, building trust and a bond. Fionn quickly learned sit and down, but occasionally would stress during training and revert back to his familiar behavior. I soon learned to recognize the subtle signs of stress and stop before he reached that point.

Fionn had been with me 3 months when I moved from Texas to California. The move was very stressful and Fionn reverted back to his old habits. I decided to take Fionn along when my Border Collie was tested for her herding instinct. Much to our surprise, my sweet, shy Fionn took to herding like a duck to water. The instructor was so impressed, he decided to give Fionn a try. He moved those sheep like a pro, never backing down! Now we needed to figure out a way to control Fionn while he was herding from a distance. I purchased a vibrating collar to teach him down, but he was scared to death of it. It took nearly a month, but his training is progressing. He may never trial, but he will always herd for as long as he enjoys it.

Agility was a dream, but nearly impossible due to his "dead dog" behavior (see "[The Fly That Wasn't There](#)", page 2). With a lot of patience, advancing one step at a time and many rewards for small accomplishments, Fionn can now do jumps, tunnels and is working on the wobble board. The pride on his face when tackling a new challenge is enough to keep us doing this forever.

I hope some day this breeding will stop! Until then, I want everyone to know that these dogs are wonderful and can achieve remarkable accomplishments through love and patience. Words alone cannot thank Joann for saving Fionn and allowing him to be part of my life, but it's the best I can do. THANK YOU JOANN! ■

Thanks

Thanks Kathy (SNAP) for allowing us to use all available space (we even added 2 pages) to address important issues that occur in rescue. While there are many success stories of saving pups and great adoptions, we also deal with things like medical emergencies, behavior issues and, in Riku's case, even death. We dedicated this issue to Riku, may he run freely, no longer confined to a silent dark world!

Feedback!

Tell Us What You Think

Thanks for the feedback on previous issues. We would love to hear more!!! Tell us what you would like to see in future issues. All comments are welcomed!

If you would like to submit a "Lucky Lethal" story, please send your story, along with a picture, to Cyndi at aussies@aussielads.com You will receive notification of when your story will be published.

If you know of someone who would like to receive our newsletter but does not have internet access, please contact Kathy at snap_4thedogz@sbcglobal.net for details on how to obtain a hard copy. ■

Information!

About our newsletter

Lethal Whites Across USA is a publication by SNAP and Aussielads Aussie Rescue for those interested in the support of Lethal Whites (Special Needs Aussies). The articles and information contained in this publication have been deemed to be of interest to our readers, but do not necessarily reflect the beliefs or the opinions of all Aussie Lovers. Reader input is encouraged and will be seriously considered for future publications. ■

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Lethal Whites



Join Our Team

Lethals Across the USA

SNAP and Aussielads Aussie Rescue constantly get calls asking for help with Lethals-In-Need all across the USA. Our goal is to establish safe havens for all of the Lethals located in other states. We are attempting to establish "contacts" in as many states as possible to help get these precious babies to safety. If you can offer any assistance such as fostering, temporary fostering, transport, evaluations, home checks or simply answer questions someone might have about Lethal Whites, please consider joining our team of great people! If you would like to "join our team", please email Cyndi@cableaz.com for details!

PLEASE CONSIDER FOSTERING!

If you are interested in becoming a foster home, please contact Lorraine (Arizona) at k9mom@cox.net or call (480) 654-2354 or Kathy Munie (Missouri) at snap_4thedogz@sbcglobal.net or call (314) 853-6542 ■

Donations are welcome!



Donations are not only welcome, but are always needed, especially for Vet care. If you would like to make a monetary donation to help us save many more Lethals-In-Need, please send a check payable to:

SNAP, 9328 Talbot Drive, St. Louis, MO 63123

OR

Aussielads Aussie Rescue, 926 W. Nido Avenue,
Mesa, AZ 85210. ■

Editors: Cyndi Cunico - Mesa, Arizona

Kathy Munie - St. Louis, Missouri

Look for our January, 2004 issue! We hope the New Year brings more success stories for all the Lethals-In-Need as well as reducing the number of Lethals being born! ■