

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

Friends are treasures. They help us travel some difficult roads at times. Friends can have four feet. On one of my difficult roads I had the company of ‘Pumpkin’ an older golden retriever and ‘Joy’ a sassy cocker spaniel – both from the Northwoods Humane Society. Sadly, Pumpkin, did not make the full journey. I had to say goodbye to her 1/3rd of the way along. But ‘Joy’ kept us the pace and then some.

My special friend, Susan Horrocks and her husband Kevin have been on a difficult road of late. I received this e-mail and picture from her. She gave me permission to share their tale, knowing that others have been comforted by their four legged friends on difficult journeys.

“I’ve noticed NHS”’s Pet Tails project, and it’s a wonderful way to honor the animals in our lives. I’m not writing a contribution for that, because it might be hard for people to be reminded of similar health experiences. I’m just sharing some thoughts with you as a dear friend, and because you’ve been down this road with animals many, many times, more than most people. You’ve also been down the road with cancer. Just think of it as a ‘Tribute to a Little Brown and White Dog’.

Kevin and Georgie bonded almost immediately when she came to us 7+ years ago. Since we had four Brittanies before her, I’d seen Kevin’s amateur dog training skills at work thanks in part to the puppy class we took at NHS, and the hours he spent with all of them. I’d also seen the trust and affection grow from Georgie, who was, as the trainer put it early on, “forward focused”. Wired for action, not initially a cuddler.

Georgie will be eight in April. Over the years, she’s become galvanized to our wonky household of three, and us to her. When Kevin was diagnosed, and he was so horribly sick and miserable at the beginning, Georgie knew something was wrong, of course. His wracking coughs would bring her to my side. Her eyes would shift to mine, then shift to the direction of the bathroom where Kevin was hacking. Her eyes would shift back to mine and then toward him, repeatedly, “What’s happening to my best friend?” Every night and morning she would come up close to our faces for a deep sniff, maybe as reassurance. Or, just as likely, sniffing out illness.

Thankfully, Kevin’s cough has been chemically nuked and he’s doing very well, but Georgie stays glued to him and is vigilant to his every move. She and I have formed a close team of two, and the affection has grown deeper than ever. We wake every morning at five, and we find her sitting waiting for us with her stuffed possum in her mouth – ready to be chased around the cocktail table for a game of pre-coffee insanity. When we turn in at night, she settles in to her spot in the middle of the bed with her head resting on Kevin, then later shifts to me. She’s spent hours in the car every single day for the past seven weeks as we’ve driven to Ashland for radiation, and has been a trooper, she goes with the program. She seems to know, as we do, that this cancer road is our 9-5 job, for now. And that girl is On. The. Job.

We've love watching the animal documentaries that explain creatures' super human instincts and abilities. We know Georgie knows, and we are so grateful for her four-legged caregiving every single day. This emotional roller coaster we're on feels more like fun when she's around. And, yeah, it's all about love."

Thank you for sharing Susan! I saw Kevin at the bank and he was very perky and smiling as only Kevin does.

Dates to Save March 7, 20, May3, 17, May 1 Bingo at Powell's on Round Lake – 5:30 pm

April 27 – Spay-ghetti and No Balls – Vet Center 5 pm

June 7 – Raise the Woof – Eagles Cover Band – Park Center – 7:30 pm

