

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

On Tuesday, May 6th, we had to say good-bye to Lola. We, which includes my husband Mike, myself and our dog Chip, (our cat Belle was not a fan) are very sad. We all feel a hole in our home – a missing little energy, a neediness that we attended to, a tapping of feet in excitement for treats and meals and a warm body by our feet.



I didn't expect to be writing this article. Last Thursday, Lola, our little Yorkie, was experiencing some constipation. Then she began vomiting phlegm with dots of blood. She has always had a sensitive digestive system and this has happened before. Her Vet had prescribed some medication that we kept on hand and we gave her Pepto-Bismol which always calmed the situation. But it did not this time. She was not able to keep food down and she quit eating but she drank a lot of water.

Monday morning, Veterinarian Dr. Abby, saw Lola. She did blood work and an X-ray. Lola had recently seen her for her annual wellness checkup and we had a fecal done two weeks before and all was good. When Dr. Abby shared the results of the blood tests and the x-ray with me, I knew things were not good. Lola's liver marks were way off the chart. Her liver was not working. Lola had pancreatitis, the X-ray showed that there was an inflammation in the stomach, most likely she had ulcers in her esophagus. The X-ray showed that in the past she had a fractured leg that had healed itself. There was also a needle in her body near her stomach. That did not appear to be causing any issues but it certainly shouldn't be there. The clinic kept Lola for the day and gave her fluids. I picked her up at 4 pm and we all spent the night together.

We knew that she was failing. What was so amazing to us is that she expressed no pain. Pancreatitis is extremely painful. I had it when I was treated for pancreatic cancer. Mike took me back to Mayo when we were home for a weekend break from treatment and I pretty much cried the whole four hours to Rochester until it stopped and I fell asleep. Our little dog did none of that. She still tried to jump up on the couch and she tried to follow me.

Lola came to us as an adult. She had belonged to a family that had trauma and a tragic loss. The mother, my friend, asked me to take Lola. We had two other dogs at the time and Lola fit right in. She had her challenges – house training, trust, anxiety – but eventually she was at home and comfortable.

Mike and I noticed that Lola was hard of hearing or wondered if she was ignoring us. We knew that she had difficulty seeing. She was having more house accidents. When we went for walks, she would slow down sooner than in the past and she was not enthusiastic about seeing the leash as our dog Chip was. Treats were still a big deal to her. She slept in bed with us and fortunately, when she needed to go out she would get to Mike and whimper in his face and he would go out with her. In the past couple of weeks we commented on her body posture being a little droopy. Never did we think that she was have such major issues or that she was in pain.

We could have chosen to take her to the University of Minnesota where they have better imaging and can do laparoscopic surgery in order to do a biopsy. This may have given us a why, it wasn't going to give us a cure and this little dog was so very fragile at this point.

On Tuesday morning I returned to Dr. Abby and her wonderful staff. I still did not think we were going to have to say good-bye but it was time. I called Mike and he came to the clinic with Chip and together

we let her know that we loved her. A long time dear friend, Rhonda Rady works at the clinic. She has known Chip and Lola (and all of our animals) and she gently guided us through the goodbye process.

Lola was Mike's 'girl'. I love Mike for many reasons, but his gentleness and caring for her totally warmed my heart. The day we said 'goodbye' he could not talk about it. I cried and still do at unexpected moments.

I recently finished a series of paintings each one based on a 'feeling...' I did not do one for grief but I am going to now.

All of us face loss in our lifetime. This weekend we will be going to the funeral of our neighbor's father who lived in Illinois. He was the patriarch of the family and he was dearly loved by all of them. We were blessed to know him. All though it is hard to grieve, it is so joyous to know life with wonderful people and pets.

Dates to Save:

May 24 – Dining With Cats and Dogs – Lynn's Custom Meats and Catering – 10:30 to 2 p.m.