

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

“My dogs and cats are not pets – they are family!” This quote did not originate with me but has been echoed again and again by those that see their animals as part of the fiber of a family. Recently, Mike and I took our first month long vacation to Florida – we were snow birds. At first I fought the idea of such a long time away from life in Hayward. I like the winter and Mike can’t put on enough layers and does not like the cold. When his mother, Dorothy, was alive I used her as the excuse – a valid one – that we could not go away for too long. We lost Dorothy during Covid. My other excuse was that I did not want to leave our animals for such a long time – a very valid reason!

This year I bit the bullet, and we rented a place in Port Charlotte for one month and we took our dogs – Chip and Lola – packed up the car and headed on our adventure. It was a great trip. There were no problems finding a motel along the way, the house we rented allowed dogs and we found restaurants that let you eat with your dogs outside! Having the dogs with us made the house seem homey and as usual they joined us when we had coffee together in the morning. On the way home we stopped in Nashville for a night of listening to country music. We stayed at the downtown Sheraton. It really made me smile to see my dogs interact with all the many varied guests in the lobby and see Chip’s delight as we rode in the glass elevator. It was definitely a family outing. (We were not able to bring our cat, Belle as there were no rentals that would allow cats. Belle, however, got to be the only pet and loved by our friends Donna and Nancy. I know she was happy to see me when we returned but not sure about how she felt about the dogs returning home.)

The following story was sent to me by writer Melissa Spero, a NHS supporter and animal lover. Her story is about pets and family.

“ I lost Pepper two years ago. My beautiful German Shepherd/black Labrador mix was taken from me by the person I trusted most. It’s crazy how much we form a bond and attachment to our pets. They become such a part of us that we forget what life was like before them. Over the 8 years we were together, I assumed Pepper and I that bond. All it took was peanut butter toast to prove me wrong...Just let me explain. Enter Joshua Merrill -the love of Pepper’s life. It started small. She gave him a few licks at their first meeting. She let him take her on some walks. She frolicked in the ocean a time or two with him. Then they shared this special moment. Josh and I had been together almost a year. It was around the holidays. Pepper did her signature cuddle move. (Where she doggy slams against you, then slides down your body until her head rests on your chest). I have a picture of the exact moment she looked up at Josh for the first time after resting her head on his chest. Love and trust radiates from her eyes. She realized Josh was part of our pack and embraced him. What finally cemented their bond was when Josh and I moved in together. After our family merged, it didn’t take long for Pepper to switch from a mama’s girl to a daddy’s girl. Her first move was to take over Josh’s bed, even though she has an orthopedic, extremely comfortable dog bed. It only grew from there. Now I watch my girl wait for daddy at the door until he comes home from work. They have a morning tradition of sharing peanut butter toast for breakfast. Pepper slowly pushes me off the bed until she’s snuggled up to Josh by herself. Josh receives endless kisses from Pepper Princess but she turns her head away from me when I ask for one. Pepper’s life includes endless daily walks in our forested yard, free to roam with her dad as

she pleases. Her favorite part is to stop and tilt her head upwards. She pauses as she takes in her surroundings. Always a good reminder for me to do the same. I'm always amazed at dog's ability to love unconditionally. Aren't you? Want to experience that bond for yourself and your family? Don't have a dog of your own? Feel it's time for a new family member? Please stop by the Northwoods Humane Society to volunteer or adopt of princess or prince of your own. As for Pepper, she's Josh's shadow, his protector and favorite food taster. And I couldn't be prouder. Yes, I lost Pepper two years ago, but I gained a family. Josh was our missing piece. Pepper loves him as much as I do. I trust her judgement.

Our family is complete...for now...

Dates to Save:

March 29 – Wednesday – Bingo at Powell's on Round Lake – 5:30 p.m.

April 5 – Wednesday – Bingo at Powell's on Round Lake – 5:30 p.m.

April 22 – Spay-ghetti and No Balls Dinner and Baking Contest – Hayward Vet Center – 5 p.m.

April 26 – Bingo at Powell's on Round Lake – 5:30 p.m.

May 26 – Dining For Cats and Dogs – Lynn's Custom Meats and Catering – 10:30 a.m.