

Local couple adopts another rescue dog

By Jodi Schneider McNamee
Correspondent

Sometime last fall a three- to four-month-old black German shepherd mix dog was found roaming the streets of Yakima, Washington. He had no tags or microchip. Luckily for this homeless pup, someone picked him up and brought him to Wags to Riches Animal Rescue and Sanctuary near Yakima.

Sisters City Council member Wendy Holzman and her husband, Alan, have faced the challenges of adopting a shelter dog more than once, and when they saw the sweet face of the black shepherd mix puppy on Petfinder they decided to meet him.

“Our daughter Maya was home for Christmas and I had mentioned that we were thinking about getting another dog. It’s been over a year that our dog Sadie passed away,” said Wendy.

When they adopted Sadie from Heartland Humane Society in Corvallis 12 years ago, she was a headstrong seven-month-old black and white Border collie mix that loved people.

“My daughter and I started looking on Petfinder. We

found out that the animal rescue organization kept the puppy that was found wandering in Yakima for about a month to see if someone would claim him, but nobody did,” Holzman said.

“Then he went to foster care, and that’s where we adopted him from. By then he was already over five months old and very healthy. We brought him home on January 3, right after the new year, and named him Colby.

“We had a honeymoon period with Colby where things were great. And then it was couple of rough months, so we turned to dog trainer Anne Geser.”

According to the ASPCA, most newly adopted dogs are in a state of severe adjustment to what is a whole new world for them. It’s a new environment, with new sights, sounds, people and possibly other animals, and can result with a dog sort of shutting down as he absorbs all of this new information and tries to figure out his place in his new world. Think of it like a human being plopped down in a new country. The new dog seems fairly calm, passive, and quiet, but as he becomes adjusted and more

comfortable his true personality shines through. Many people end up calling a dog trainer for help after weeks have passed with their new dog.

The behaviors aren’t really new to the dog; they just seem new to the dog to his pet parents. So when these behaviors start to show themselves, people are often caught off guard.

“I remember Colby trying to bite our feet while we were walking,” said Alan Holzman. “And when we were sitting down eating dinner he would jump right into our lap! He didn’t understand what we wanted from him.”

“We worked with Ann Geser, and she really helped us understand more about Colby and his behaviors,” Wendy said. “Without her help I don’t know what we would have done; she did a wonderful job and we learned clicker training. He was in a negative behavior pattern and he needed positive reinforcement. Colby has now turned a corner to where everything is fitting into place. It’s been fun watching him really come around, he’s a great dog.”

Colby goes to Central Bark for daycare once a week, and



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Alan and Wendy Holzman with Colby. It’s not always easy adopting a rescue dog, but hard work brings a new family member.

will be going to group lessons at Dancin’ Woofs in Bend.

“We had one private lesson with Kristin, owner of Dancin’ Woofs, and she recommended a harness for Colby since he was never leash trained, and that’s what

we’re working on. One thing about Colby is that he plays nicely with other dogs,” said Wendy Holzman.

“Colby now has a much better idea of what we want from him, and he’s a wonderful part of our family.”

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