



TRASK BEDORTHA

CHRISTINE DAMBACH
*self-employed insurance agent
 for Farmers Insurance*
KONA

When Christine Dambach, who is originally from Switzerland, adopted Kona almost 13 years ago from an ad in the paper, the dog was 2 years old and had “amazing energy, but I knew she was ‘right’ for us, when at the initial meeting she rolled on her back and let my very old and fragile German shepherd be the boss.”

In addition to Kona, Dambach has a rescued Boston terrier and three rescued cats. In her spare time she walks half marathons as a fundraiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Dambach adopted her other pit bull, Rosie, to help work off Kona’s energy. “They were the perfect match for each other; they played and slept together and not once in 13 years did they get into a fight. Unfortunately Rosie died last summer; she was 15 years old, very spoiled and very sweet. She too, was rather perfect.”

She says, “Kona is also almost 15 years old now and spends a lot of time sleeping; my cats all love to cuddle with her and go out of their way to rub on Kona and walk between her legs.”

Kona has her own unique way of dealing with hot summer days, Dambach says. When she gets too hot, Kona moves her head to the edge of the sofa and lets gravity take over, letting her body crash to the floor. “At first it was a bit surprising to hear 70 pounds hit the floor, but that seems to be the preferred way to get off the bed, sofa or chair,” she says.

Dambach says, “I love the breed. I believe they are beautiful dogs that are very kind and loyal, and if brought up right, are the best dog anybody could ever want. It is too bad that the press in general gives them such a bad rap.”



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RACHAEL WOLFGANG
contracts specialist for UO
JOY

Joy had been abandoned at a shelter starving and just about ready to give birth. She was due to be put down due to lack of space, Rachael Wolfgang says.

Liesl Wilhardt of Luv-a-Bull stepped in and bailed the dogs out. Wolfgang and her husband were looking for a second dog “to keep our very needy mastiff-Labrador mix company.” They stumbled across Joy, who was being fostered by Sweet Potato Pie owner Elizabeth Thompson. “She was the first dog who patiently endured our mastiff’s obnoxious entreaties to play,” Wolfgang says. “She was patient and sweet, but had been horribly abused. She was afraid of everything, and would huddle shaking under the table if a person so much as raised their hands over their heads — yoga at home was difficult!”

Wolfgang says, “I am ashamed to say it, but I actually used to be one of those people who bought into the pit bull stereotype. I had heard they were aggressive and what a horrible breed they were, and was terrified at the prospect of letting such a dog into my life. I had never met a pit bull, but I had heard stories.”

She says, “A memory of Joy that will always touch me is when we were taking care of my mom after the chemotherapy hadn’t been effective. I brought my dogs over to help cheer her up. My mom had always loved my mastiff mix but had been skeptical of Joy. She was the one who had taught me to be wary of pit bulls, after all. For some reason, something about my now bed-bound mom scared my mastiff mix — he wouldn’t go in her room, which made my mom sad.”

But Wolfgang says, “Joy was in the car, so I asked my mom if she minded if I brought her in, and she nodded.” When they took her in, “Joy came happily in the room, sniffed my mom’s extended hand for only a second before giving it a big lick and going on to lick my mom’s now-smiling face. She then slowly crawled onto my mom’s bed for a better snuggle and face kissing vantage point. Normally, she would get in trouble for getting onto a couch or bed without permission, but we let this one slide. My mom was in love and later told me I might have been right about pit bulls after all.” She adds, “OK, really, she told me that Joy might not be a pit bull after all, but I knew what she meant. Joy’s unbridled affection had won her over.”



THE YEAR
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IN REVIEW

A collection of images from the photographers of Eugene Weekly

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