



# As the Fur Flies

Volume 4 Issue 1

NORSLED NEWS

December, 2008

## Karen Ramstead, World's Greatest Iditarod Musher, Came to Town!

By Jane Eagle



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Carlos, Deb, Karen, Gail, Mortishia, pictured with Donar

The weekend of July 12-13, 2008, brought the celebrated Karen Ramstead to the Bay Area, and celebrate we did! On Saturday, Karen judged a Siberian Husky Fun Match sponsored by the Siberian Husky Club of the Redwoods (SHCR). A splendid time was had by all, as those who entered dogs got informed feedback by an extremely knowledgeable and warm judge; few others know Siberians as well!

Karen has run the Iditarod 8 times, and finished 5 of those. To put this in perspective, many more people have made it to the top of Everest than have finished the Iditarod, a grueling race across 1150 miles of Alaska in winter-time, running over mountain ranges and across a frozen sea. (The race commemorates the original Serum Run of 1925, when Nome was struck by diphtheria and the only way to get the life saving serum there was by dogsled relay; Huskies literally saved the town!) Many of Karen's Iditarod finishers hold show titles in the Canadian

Kennel Club (CKC) and American Kennel Club (AKC), so it's clear she knows Sibes!

The following day, Karen gave a slide-show and talk which, although it lasted a couple of hours, was far too short! She talked about starting with her first Siberian, Meomar's Miss Liberty—Libby—and getting hooked on the breed; her hobby became an avocation, then a vocation, then took over her life (we should all be so lucky)! Karen told hilarious and dramatic stories of her dogs and her races; like most of us, her dogs are her family.

In the 2007 Iditarod, as she neared the coast, 800 miles into the race, her beloved leader Snickers collapsed and died. Heartbroken, Karen scratched from the race and went home to mourn. Karen ran in 2008 in memory of Snickers, and started a fund for research in Snicker's name.

It is Karen's care and love for her dogs which has won her a large following of fans, who gather on her North Wapiti News group on yahoo.com. You can join in, or read more about this amazing woman and her adventures at her website:

[www.northwapiti.com](http://www.northwapiti.com)



Karen's team leaving Willow, Alaska Iditarod 2008: Photo courtesy of Dan Rehak

# President's Message

By Jane Cordingley

This was the year that was—wow! We had a visit from our first Iditarod speaker, Karen Ramstead. We participated in PetSmart's Adoption Days, Pet Food Express and PetSmart Photos with Santa, Third Annual Bay Area Pet Fair, and Bay to Barkers, not to mention about 50 adoption fairs from San Rafael to Vacaville to Pleasant Hill.

Some great fundraisers included eBay auctions, raffles, and, thanks to a proposal written by some of our members, a fantastic grant from PetSmart Charities to help us supply our foster homes. Donations for specific dogs included a donation for care of Norsled rescue dog, Apple, by another rescue group, Save Our Siberians (SOS). These monies were desperately needed; most year's our adoption fees cover about 60% of our costs. Due to the extra demands this year, our costs are running even higher.

## A Four Paw Standing Ovation to Our Supporters

"Thank you" goes out to the following organizations for their kindness, thoughtfulness and support of NorSled's rescue dogs during 2008:

Alpine Veterinary Hospital  
Animal Wellness (Davis)  
ARF  
BASHRR (Bay Area Siberian Husky  
Rescue and Referral)  
Bayside Veterinary Hospital  
Bishop Ranch Veterinary Center  
Bradshaw Veterinary Clinic  
Broadway Pet Hospital  
Canine Connection Kennels  
Cottage Kennels  
Dog and Cat House Calls  
Empire Veterinary Clinic  
Happiness Country Kennels  
Husky Camp  
Lomis Basin Veterinary Clinic  
MUSH (Malumutes Unhomed Seeking  
Homes)  
Noah's Wishers  
Pet Food Express  
PetCo  
PetSmart

Why is rescue so expensive this year? This is due to many factors, including the foreclosure crisis here in California. When people lose their homes, they often cannot take a pet, especially a big dog. NorSledders fostered record number of dogs, with foster homes sometimes fitting in "one more dog". NorSledders also helped walking and socializing dogs that had to be kenneled when we ran out of foster space. As of September, we had already placed more dogs than any other year. See the chart on Page 6 to see the total projected for 2008!

So here's to the dogs, the adopters, the people who helped us, and to all NorSled Volunteers. There is a special place at the Rainbow Bridge for all of you.



Redwood Veterinary Hospital  
SFSR (San Francisco  
Samoyed Rescue)  
SHRRCA (Siberian Husky Rescue  
and Referral, CA)  
SOS (Save our Siberians)  
24 Hour PetWatch  
VCA Bay Area Animal Hospital  
VIP Fibers  
Wing and a Prayer Rescue  
Yuba Animal Hospital

### Special thanks goes to:

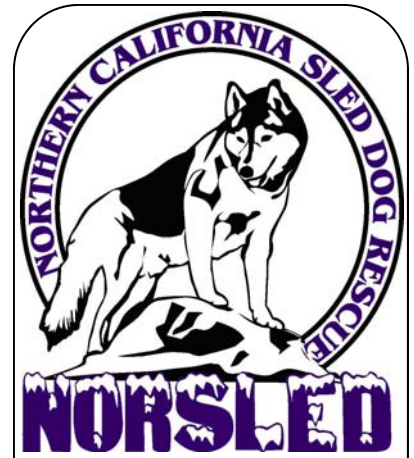
PetSmart Charities for a grant that helped us supply our foster homes

Pet Food Express for donating food every month for our hungry pups, and prizes for our events

Shelter Volunteers and Staff from across California for all you do for the dogs

All donators - without you - we could not afford to care for the dogs

ALL NORsled VOLUNTEERS - without you, we could not save dogs



As the Fur Flies  
NorSled News

Vol.4 #1

Officers/Directors  
For 2008

President  
Jane Cordingley

Vice President  
Deborah Hoelscher

Treasurer  
Judy Homewood

Secretary  
Catherine Sparks

Rescue/Adoption  
Coordinator  
Gail de Rita

Assistant  
Rescue Coordinator  
Lianne Werner

Printer  
Michael Geddry

Editor  
Staff

Layout  
Sharon Nicholas

Northern California  
Sled Dog Rescue  
P.O. Box 5784  
Vallejo, CA 94591

1-800-471-6822

E-mail  
RESCUE@NORSLED.ORG

# You Too Can Foster Dogs: Really!

By Jane Eagle

People often say they could never foster dogs: they would get too attached to let the dogs go. I started fostering dogs for NorSled in 2007, when a plea went out for a place to put a dog who just had to be saved. All our foster homes were full; so I took a deep breath, and volunteered to take him: Dawson was not going to die because it would be "too hard" for me! Like almost every dog, he was sweet; he was grateful; he was a handful but workable. He was very ill when he came here, and needed a place to heal, while waiting for his "fur"ever home. When he was ready, his true family found him, and he's living happily ever after. Since then, many dogs have passed through my home; some were only here for a couple of days, some for a couple of months. One never left. I love each one deeply. Each one taught me lessons in life and love, and each one made my life richer for having known them (dogs are like that). That's why it is not so hard to bring a dog into our lives. But: how do you let go?

Well, you start by reminding yourself several times every day: (s)he is NOT staying; this is a temporary situation. Then you open your heart completely, as they heal from being abandoned, or lost, or sick, and become who they are. The nature of our relationships with dogs is love, and fostering is no different. With dogs, you can only be in the moment; and in the moment, you have a deepening connection with the dog.

So: then your foster dog is found by people who want to love her for the

rest of her life. As the foster "mom," I have final say over where this dog will live; and I only let my fosters go to a home as good as mine or better. This is the moment of truth. **It is always acceptable to decide to keep the dog.** This is affectionately called "foster failure" but it is not a failure in any sense of the word; failure in this sense means the dog is finally where (s)he truly belongs! It is at this moment, I say to myself: okay, I can keep this dog whom I love. OR, I can let her go to a truly wonderful home (with visiting privileges for me) and save another dog's life. It is always a bit of a heartbreak, but it is almost always a no-brainer. How can I pass up the chance to save another dog's life? At some point, a time comes when I look into my foster dog's eyes, and see the love there, the gratitude,

"YOU are helping make the world a better place, one life at a time."

the intelligence, *the life*; and I think: if I did not take this dog, *she would be dead by now, and in a landfill.* It takes my breath away. It makes me want to help more dogs.

And I will tell you the great secret of fostering: I get to know so many beautiful dogs with shining eyes, deep souls, and hearts full of love: dogs I would otherwise never have gotten to know! Each one has touched my spirit, given me love, taught me about life, redemption, second chances, and forgiveness; each one has reminded me to live in the moment, let go of whatever happened in the past, and HEAL! Each one has been as much of a bless-



Jane's foster dogs, Brigitte and Rizzo

ing to me, as I have been to them. In my book, this is what life is for.

When you foster a dog, in a very real way, you are saving that dog's life. Shelters only hold a dog for so long because they do not have room for all the homeless pets; and there are literally millions more dogs than there are homes. By taking a dog into your home, you are literally saving the dog's life. By giving the dog time, and a place to heal, you are literally saving the dog. It is no small thing. I think it was Mother Theresa who said that most of us will never do great things; but we can all do small things with great love. Fostering is doing a great thing with great love. It has made my life richer than ever. Open your home to a dog, and you will know that YOU are helping make the world a better place, one life at a time.

© Jane Eagle, July 30, 2008



## 2008 NorSled Quilt



The 2008 NorSled Quilt is a custom-designed quilt incorporating several classic quilt-block patterns: Split Rail, Sawtooth, Bear Claw and Maple Leaf. Each pattern has a theme. The Split Rail pattern represents the fence that no Husky will stay behind! The Sawtooth pays tribute to the Sawtooth Pack of the Nez Perce. Bear Claw resembles the wolf claw, and the Maple Leaf pattern provides the Northern Rockies Grey Wolves their spring and summer shade. The quilt back is a warm and cozy fleece "Scandinavian Print" giving further support to our Northern Breed theme. The center block is empty and is designed to have the winner's choice of pet picture added to that area. Good luck and thanks so much for supporting NorSled Rescue!





### Carting Schedule

Location:

Lagoon Valley Regional Park, Vacaville, CA

January 4, 2009

February 1, 2009

March 1, 2009

For more info contact us at [rescue@norsled.org](mailto:rescue@norsled.org)

### BASH Schedule

SnoBash in Bear Valley  
January, April, 2009

Northern Breed Fun Match  
May or June, 2009

Ice Cream Social  
September, 2009

5K Dog Walk  
October, 2009

Parades, Holiday Party  
November, December, 2009

Check us out at [www.bayareasiberian.org](http://www.bayareasiberian.org)

# What to do for FUN now that you have a "Sled Dog"

By Cathy Sparks and Randee McQueen

Now that you have your dog from NorSled, what can you do with your energetic pup?

Pictured are some NorSled friends carting: this is like sledding, but without the snow. This is a fun way to burn up some of your dog's energy. In Alaska the mushers call any dog that pulls a husky. So even if your dog doesn't exactly look like a typical husky, if your dog pulls, carting may be something you would like to learn. NorSled has some fun days coming up where you can give your dog the experience of pulling a cart.

Here are some helpful web pages and groups to get you started:

[www.Sleddoggin.com](http://www.Sleddoggin.com)—area info on sledding, races, equipment, and a lot of other helpful information

[www.blackicedogsledding.com](http://www.blackicedogsledding.com)—information on harness and equipment

[www.sndd.org](http://www.sndd.org)—for information on sledding, carting and skijoring

A very helpful book I read to assist with training is *Training Lead Dogs*, by Lee Fishback.



### Bay Area Siberian Husky Club

BASH is a club created to have fun with your dogs. Most own Siberians or northern breeds, but not all; it isn't required to even own a dog to be a member.



We offer a free year's membership to the club to anyone that has adopted a dog from us, NorSled, Siberian Husky Rescue

and Referral (SHRR) or a shelter.

BASH has fun. In January and April we host SnoBASH in Bear Valley. We offer rides for humans and dogs on a 1-mile course. We have sleds to borrow so people can try their dogs on their own, or we put their dogs in with more experienced dogs. We have harnesses and collars to loan out. In May or June we have a Northern Breed Fun Match. In September we have an Ice Cream Social (Ice Cream for dogs and humans along with fun games). In October we do a 5K dog walk. In November and December we do Parades and a great Holiday Party. Check us out on our website [www.bayareasiberian.org](http://www.bayareasiberian.org).



Jake, we are leading  
—Louie and Rose

# Finding a Dog Trainer

By Pat Knittel

*Perhaps you simply want to teach basic manners to your new, best canine friend: teaching them how to be a good citizen in the home and how to behave politely around other dogs and people. Other reasons you may seek a trainer are that Fido is exhibiting fear, aggression or destructive behavior and you need a professional consultation.*

Dog training is an unregulated industry. Anyone can hang out their shingle and call themselves a dog trainer. Many self-proclaimed dog trainers claim their experience came from "growing up around dogs" or having "an innate ability to work with dogs" or "something they were born with". An analogy I'd like to put forth: If I sent a human child to school, it would not be enough for their teacher to claim their qualifications were acquired by simply "having been around children" or "having a way with children". I would expect them to be credentialed. You will often pay just as much or more money for an uncertified dog trainer as someone who has earned their certification. I encourage you to get the most for your money by finding a trainer who is a Certified Pet Dog Trainer (CPDT). To earn the certification of CPDT, one must acquire 300 hours of apprenticeship, study Learning Theory, Instruction skills, Husbandry, Ethology, and Equipment. In addition to the above, continuing education units must be taken to maintain the certification along with letters of recommendation from a veterinarian, a client and an already Certified Pet Dog Trainer. To learn more or to find a trainer visit [www.ccpdt.com](http://www.ccpdt.com).

Avoid trainers who claim a "lifetime guarantee". How can anyone guarantee behavior for a lifetime? Could you guarantee that someone who'd gone through a smoking cessation program would never again in their lifetime pick up a cigarette? Also, maintaining reliable behavior in your dog is dependent upon your compliance with the training program and the effectiveness of your methods.

In Northern California we are incredibly fortunate to have several of the most respected animal behaviorists whose focus is dog training. These are people who've brought training of dogs to its current state where methods are based

upon the science of animal learning. Dr. Ian Dunbar of Berkeley, California, a veterinarian and animal behaviorist who owns SIRIUS PUPPY TRAINING. SIRIUS offers classes throughout the Bay Area in both puppy classes and basic manners and obedience. See [www.siriuspup.com](http://www.siriuspup.com). Dr. Dunbar also founded the website [www.dogstardaily.com](http://www.dogstardaily.com) with loads of information on behavior and training that includes videos and audio lectures. Dr. Dunbar has authored excellent books on puppy training and training adolescent and adult dogs.

Jean Donaldson, PhD is the Director of the San Francisco SPCA Academy for Dog Trainers. This academy is very well regarded and graduates have studied with several of the most respected behaviorists in the country. Donaldson has authored several outstanding books on dogs and dog behavior and often lectures at the SF SPCA and around the country. The SF SPCA can refer you to graduates of their academy who upon graduation are granted a Certificate in Training and Behavioral Counseling (CTC). (<http://www.sfspca.org/academy/referral.shtml>) The SF SPCA also offers many fun and specialized classes in training your dog and classes for specific behavioral issues. See [www.sfspca.org](http://www.sfspca.org). Another resource to find certified trainers is the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, [www.apdt.com](http://www.apdt.com).

In the North Bay, Trish King, CPDT directs the behavior and training department for Marin Humane Society. King has authored several great books and runs a certification program for dog trainers as well. Marin Humane Society can be a great resource for classes, questions and referrals regarding training.

Training with your dog either for basic manners or a serious behavioral issue should, above all, create a positive bond between you and your furry companion. It has been proven that methods that are aversive and create fear in an animal may temporarily suppress behavior, but do not offer the animal the opportunity to effectively learn sustainable, desirable behaviors. Dog training has progressed greatly in the last 30 years. Current methods are much more dog and people friendly in addition to being more effective. Training should be enjoyable for you both.



## Adoption Fairs With Santa Photos

Pet Food Express  
11-4:

Sunday, December 7  
Pleasant Hill

Saturday, December 13  
Clayton

Sunday, December 14  
Pinole

Sunday, December 21  
Benicia

PetSmart  
(Santa Claws Photos)  
11-4:

Saturday, December 20  
Vacaville

See our website below  
for directions

## Adoption Fairs with Dog Training

Pat Knittel is currently pursuing her CPDT Certification and will start training sessions after some NorSled Benicia Adoption fairs in 2009. Please check the Event Page on the NorSled website for the training dates:

[www.norsled.org](http://www.norsled.org)

# Through the Years with Norsled

By Cathy Sparks

In 1998, a small group of husky lovers, who were members of Siberian Husky Rescue Referral (SHRRCA), formed NorSled. The group wanted to rescue mixed breeds of northern dogs, like Alaskan Huskies, Samoyeds, Malberians (Malamute Husky mix), Husky/German Shepherd mixes and purebred Huskies. NorSled formed as a sub group of SHRRCA, using their adoption contract and 501c3 non-profit status.

NorSled wanted to be independent and have its own non profit status. All the members had full time jobs, had foster dogs and did adoption fairs every weekend; no one had time to complete the State and Federal paperwork necessary to become a non profit organization.

Things happen for a reason. In May 2000 Cathy Sparks took a 500 foot tumble down the side of Mt. Hood, Oregon and severely broke her leg. Stuck in bed for six weeks, she read all about becoming a non profit organization and filling out paperwork. In due time NorSled had its own non profit 501c3 status, and the group was expanding. The more dedicated members we had, the more dogs saved.

## Memorable moments:

NorSled members felt two dogs, Mattie and Heathcliff, were extremely

bonded and needed to be placed in the same home. Waiting for the right home, one member fostered them for over a year. This was a true demonstration of doing what is right for the dogs.

The Woodland 12, (really 14 huskies) who had very minimal social skills were losing their home in two weeks. Many members of NorSled and SHRRCA pulled together and vetted these dogs and placed them all in either permanent or foster homes within two weeks. Fox News came twice to the home in Woodland and put NorSled on the news. We are still thankful for that. What a Team!

In 2001 having a puppy in rescue was unheard of. Then along came Jupiter, a 3-month-old husky with sight problems. Jupie was the recipient of one of NorSled's first major fund raising efforts. Many tests were run on Jupie to find out what was wrong with his eyes; the foster home spent so much time at the optometrist that they became friends. For Jupie to have a happy life, the choice was to remove his eyes. Several thousand dollars of medical care financed his medical care. Happy Jupiter became and still is. He still strives in a home and is quite an incredible navigator.

Other dogs who have been fortu-

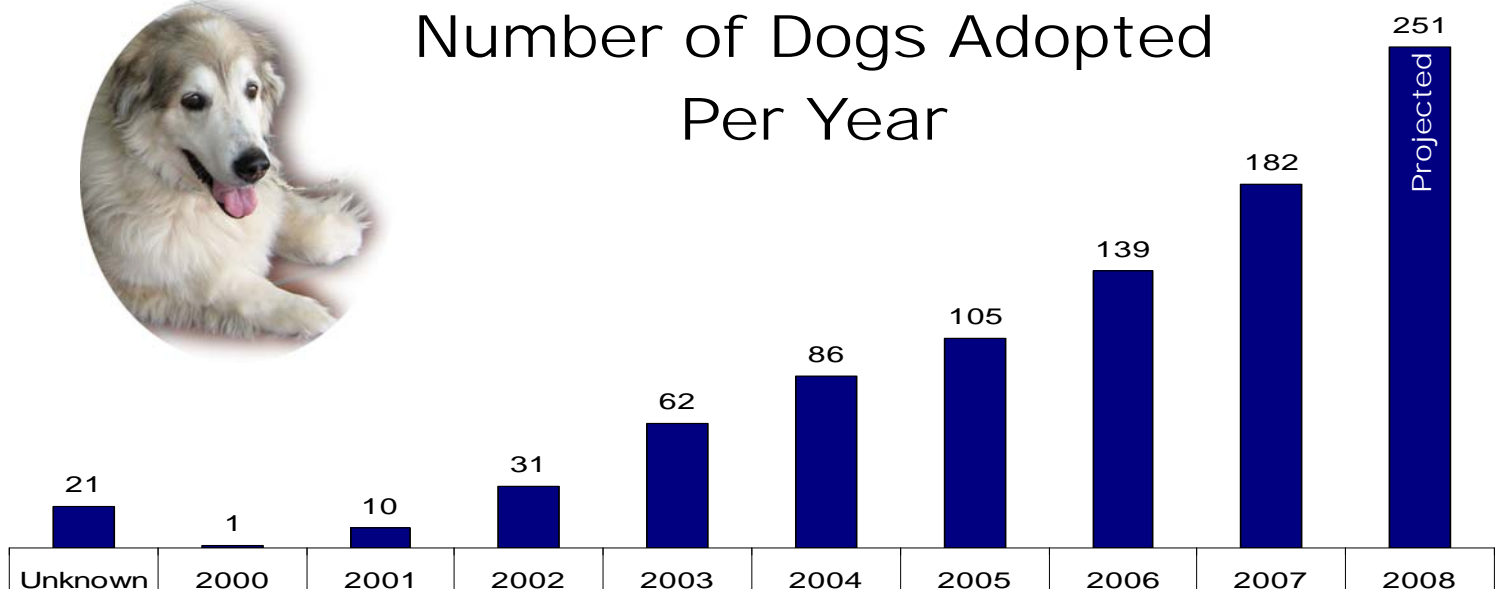
nate to become Happy Huskies because of the wonderful and generous contributions of caring people are: Sheba (broken leg), Marshmallow (broken hip), Nala 1 (aortic arch repair), Nala 2 (dislocated hip surgery), Candy (urethras fixed); and Polo (hip replacement.) Cool Hand Luke, Yaro, Makita, Cole are some of the numerous dogs who have had treatment for heartworms.

## TODAY

NorSled's membership is at 89 dedicated people. At any given time we have approximately 18-25 dogs in foster homes. Norsled has continued to grow and help dogs; last year we placed over 180 dogs in happy homes. The number of puppies in rescue has dramatically increased. There have been puppy litters born in rescue. We've rescued moms with litters as young as 10 days old; we've even rescued three week old pups with no mom. The number of sick dogs with heartworms and other parasites has also increased over the years. Because of the compassionate members of NorSled and our fabulous supporters these dogs have been provided the medical treatment and care necessary to ensure that they are Happy Huskies. (Follow the chart beneath for the growth of the group.) 🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾



## Number of Dogs Adopted Per Year



# My Beautiful Husky With Sapphire Eyes

By Heather York

*The first time my 8-year-old daughter, Teana, saw Riva, she exclaimed, "Oh Daddy! She's SO beautiful! She has Sapphire Eyes!" Teana is now 13, and she still describes Riva as "My Beautiful Husky With Sapphire Eyes". She loves the freckles on Riva's nose too. She says they're just like her own freckles.*

Riva has been part of our family for six years, and we honestly can't remember a time when she wasn't here. It was love at first sight between Teana and Riva. They just seemed to know each other's hearts. They're best friends. Riva sleeps on Teana's bed, and they are constant companions. Teana tells Riva all her secrets, and Riva listens with complete adoration.

Before we decided to adopt Riva into our family, we took Moon, our first Husky, and drove three hours over the mountain to meet Riva and her foster mother. Moon and Riva hit it off right away. Moon took it upon herself to teach Riva how to play. In the beginning, Riva would just roll over in submissive mode, much to Moon's confusion. Eventually Riva realized Moon was just playing, and she would wrestle, bark, and chase her all over our yard. This delighted all of us! However, Moon never could teach Riva how to hop into the back of a pickup truck!

Moon and Riva love to run! We have acreage in the mountains near Susanville, and the Huskies run all over! They jump and hop over rocks and logs, chasing imaginary critters, and just basically enjoy the exercise and the outdoors in all kinds of weather. Moon always out-distances Riva, but she slows down and waits for her to catch up. We sometimes have to make Riva stop running, because she will never give up trying to keep up with Moon.

Teana and Riva have a game they play when they're on their walks--they "race", and sometimes Riva even lets Teana win! Teana swears Riva lets her win on purpose. Riva likes to jump over puddles, and they even skip! Teana taught Riva to respond to "right" and "left" commands. It's fun to watch them interact.

Riva is amazingly flexible and coordinated. She can catch her tail by leaping up and twisting—then she will spin in circles until she's dizzy and has to lay down. She grins afterward, and this makes us laugh. I'm pretty sure she does a lot of things just to make us laugh!

I mention Riva's flexibility, because to know her is to know that she sleeps in the most unusual positions. She starts out laying all in the same direction, but when sleep claims her, she morphs into amazing gymnastic positions. My favorite is when her head is upside down with her front legs to the left and her back legs on the floor to the right! I can only shake my head and wonder if she's really comfortable, but she must be, because she always ends up sleeping in these bizarre positions!

About a year after we adopted Riva, she was diagnosed with Seizure Disorder. We have it under control with Phenobarbital. Riva takes a pill three times a day with a spoonful of peanut butter. Riva will do absolutely *anything* for peanut butter! I was shocked when someone asked me if we would give Riva up because of this issue. That never occurred to us. She's family, and we take care of each other.

Riva is always such a happy dog. She smiles. It's true, she does! Riva is always cheerful... and always up to something! She thinks everything is a game, and she fully intends to have fun! Eating is an especially fun game. Riva thinks her food is yummy, but first it's fun to play catch with it! She will choose a piece of kibble and toss it clear across the room just to pounce on it and toss it up in the air over and over again. After awhile she will munch it down and trot back to the bowl for another "toy". Another fun Riva "game" is to get a BIG drink of water and then walk over and dump it in Teana's lap! Oh boy, does that one get a reaction!! We know she's doing this on purpose, because she "kisses" Teana afterward.

We have a nickname for Riva—it's "Kyper". She earned this name not from her distinctive black bandit mask, but because she "borrows" things!



Riva with Moon

Whenever we find something missing, we check the yard and her hiding places first. Riva especially likes one of my colorful miniature teddy bears with a squeaky tummy! I can hide that little bear under several other stuffed toys, and if she's ever alone in the house for a few minutes, she will find it! It's a game now—I hide the little bear, and wait for her to discover it.

We all love to watch Riva. Just seeing her smiling face makes us smile and sometimes laugh out loud! She's funny—she will rush into a room, sit down, and then dash out like "Oh my gosh! I'm in the wrong room!" If Riva wants something, she will gaze into your eyes with soulful adoration, and you will just find yourself doing exactly what she wants. She has different expressions for a walk, needing to go outside, a cookie, or just wanting to snuggle. Riva is such a wonderful snuggle bunny...she's so soft and so very, very affectionate. She's full of love.

I wish I had the words to truly express how much having Riva in our family means to us. Maybe Grandma Gina can wrap this up for me. One Christmas Grandma was visiting and watching Riva's Husky antics as she played with the bows off the packages, and she said with a grin, "That's one *happy Husky!*"

Thank you NORsled

# You Can Be a Hero!

Do you want to be a hero for dogs like Terra? Terra was picked up by the local animal shelter and they discovered that she was pregnant. Before they could do anything about it, Terra had her five puppies there in the shelter. NorSled was called and pulled them out when the puppies were just three days old. While at the foster mom's, they were socialized, vetted, fed and cared for until they were old enough to adopt out to their new families. They have all been adopted.



dogs, especially medical care. With the huge number of dogs we worked with this year, these costs have really stretched NorSled's funds. The adoption fees we receive for placed dogs only cover about 60% of our costs.

Please consider being a hero for these dogs by donating to NorSled. We are a 501c3 non-profit, so donations are tax deductible. You can go on our website and donate through **PayPal**, or send a check to:

NorSled  
PO Box 5784, Vallejo, CA 94591



There are many costs to rescuing

## Photos with Santa



What better holiday treat than a Photo with Santa and your pet - a delightful holiday card or email! Or for a lifetime memory - why not have a picture of your pets and whole family with Santa? Think of pulling out this year's Photo with Santa to go on your tree for Christmas 2020. See page 5 sidebar for schedule of Adoption Fairs and Photos with Santa.

See NorSled Dogs to Foster or Adopt at [www.Norsled.org](http://www.Norsled.org) or [www.Petfinder.com](http://www.Petfinder.com)