

When I was growing up my family always owned a dog. Or should I say, dogs. My dad would go to the dog pound. He would take me with him. It was so exciting to see all the different kinds of dogs and cats. But also sad knowing I was going home, and they would not. I wished they could come with me, and I knew they wanted me to take them. When my dad was young he was a dog trainer and specialized in working with German Shepherds. He truly loved dogs, so it was not surprising that my dad would someday help them in a way not even he would have expected. My dad worked for CalTrans and it was quite a common occurrence that he would find dogs that were abandoned on the freeway. On one day in 1962, I was sitting on the porch in front of our house. My dad drove up in his brand new powder blue Ford Falcon station wagon. To my surprise, there was a little dog jumping up and down on the seat with his paws on the windows, ready to jump out of the car. My mom came out and my dad proceeded to tell us both that he had found this little dog on the freeway. You could tell he was only a puppy – maybe 6 months old at the most, and we later determined he was a Pomeranian. Usually when my dad came home with an abandoned dog, he would find someone that we knew who would adopt the dog. But on this day, my mom fell in love with this little puppy and immediately said she wanted to call him “Toby.” We were all very happy to have Toby as the newest addition to our family. Two weeks later, I was sitting on the porch again and my dad pulled up in his brand new powder blue Ford Falcon station wagon, and this time, there was a big dog in the front seat, jumping up and down excitedly. He opened the door and out jumped a young Keeshound. My mom came running out of the house and asked him what he was doing. My dad proceeded to tell us a story about how he was driving down the freeway in Concord when he saw a lady running to catch this dog. He pulled over and she had just about caught the dog, and was calling the dog to her saying, “Here, Poochie, Poochie.” The cars were whizzing past them and the dog was trying to dodge the woman to get away. My dad caught the dog before it ran out in the traffic and put it in his truck. The woman explained to my dad that she had seen the dog on the freeway, and was simply trying to keep the dog from getting hit by a car. Apparently this was yet another abandoned dog. So my dad told the woman that he would take the dog and try to find it a home. When the dog jumped out, it was clear that my dad was not going to give him up – this dog was going to be his. This was the start of a long relationship between my parents and both dogs. Toby lived to be 20 years old, and Poochie lived to be 18. He died shortly after my dad passed away.

There are so many dogs that need a home. More than 5,000,000 puppies are born in the U.S. every year. October is “Adopt-a-Dog” month. If you can adopt a dog, please visit on

Donations to PAWS, volunteer at the shelter, or

donate supplies or even your time.

FRRPD has designated Riverbend Park as a dog-friendly park. It has historically been used as a park where dogs can take their owners (on a leash, of course). There are future plans to designate an area of Riverbend exclusively as a dog park. If you would like to be involved in the planning or are interested in donating time or materials, please contact FRRPD at 533-2011, or FRRPD Board Member Jan Hill via e-mail at janhill@frrpd.com.

Fun Facts

If never spayed or neutered, a female dog, her mate, and their puppies could produce **more than 66,000 dogs in 6 years!**

Dog's nose prints are as unique as a human's finger prints and can be used to accurately identify them.

Quote

"I think dogs are the most amazing creatures; they give unconditional love. For me they are the role model for being alive." - Gilda Radner

FRRPD Treasure Hunt

It was a past time, but it was a good time.
I heard it from a mate named James.
And what a bountiful treasure it be!

And remember, dead men don't tell tales!

See you in the parks!