



New Leaf

The Official Newsletter of STOLA – Saluki Tree of Life Alliance

Spring, 2009

Celebration! Joy! Renewal!

STOLA is now entering its tenth year of operation in Saluki rescue and rehabilitation. We have rescued Salukis that many people said were too far gone to save, but with the kindness and care of some truly amazing volunteers those discarded dogs have gone on to live wonderful, secure lives loved by their new families. In reflecting back on these past years, perhaps one of our most disheartening moments came when we realized we did not have sufficient funding to continue our rescue efforts on behalf of Saluki crosses and that program had to be discontinued. But, due to the compassion and generosity of some individuals, we have been able to continue to help some Saluki crosses with private funding, separate from STOLA funds.

When we first began STOLA, it never occurred to us that we would be asked to help in other countries but during the past months we have received, time and again, requests to help with abandoned Salukis in the Middle East. We have received messages from rescue groups and veterinarians primarily in Kuwait and Qatar telling us that the shelter situation is woefully inadequate and Salukis are being abandoned without sufficient protective agencies to help them. Time and again they have begged for our help. Initially, we said we did not have sufficient resources to help but, as the pleas continued, we began to see more and more how much these Salukis needed help. Finally, when Animal Friends informed us that they would be sending Salukis to the U.S. to people with no sighthound experience, we could no longer look away or pretend all was well. As a rescue organization whose mission is to help Salukis in need, how could we not help them? With some funding from Animal Friends League of Kuwait and some funding from caring individuals here in the U.S. we have been able to give new lives to Salukis

who had no hope for survival. Even though the Middle Eastern Salukis are just a fraction of the hundreds of Salukis we have helped, they have made a big impact on our hearts. We are dedicating this issue to them, and to their new families. These are their stories told by their new owners. Frankly, it is hard to recall the deprivation and hardship that these Salukis came from and to see them in their new lives without getting a lump in the throat. Rescue is difficult most of the time; thankless some of the time; and rewarding always. Please share with us a joyful celebration of these wonderful Salukis' lives and that of the wonderful people who have given them a chance.

Perhaps of all the images we have, this one below of Storm, the Middle Eastern Saluki running free after six years of living in a cage captures best the spirit of this issue.



Storm - Our Middle East Saluki

by Patty Woodbury

Having received a call from one of STOLA's Regional Coordinators asking us (my husband Steve and I) to foster a Saluki we thought it over and agreed to do so. Much to our surprise we were told that he would be arriving at Logan International Airport from Kuwait. Never did we think that a Saluki from such a different part of the world would become a part of our lives. We have owned Salukis for many years and absolutely love the breed although we know that they are not for everyone. Even though we know that each Saluki has his/her own unique personality - we were curious and excited to meet one from a place so different from ours. Ayeshah of Animal Friends League of Kuwait had done the fund-raising and coordinating of the flight arrangements. It would be a 16 hour flight and she made sure that it all went smoothly. We drove to Boston excited and wondering. What would he think of a totally new environment? Could he understand our language? Would he be suffering from jet lag? Would he like us? Would he get along with our dogs? After we arrived we saw that the crates were headed our way and then we saw his lovely face. He looked at us with beautiful eyes - a burnt sienna color that were stunning with his black coat. He was amazingly fine after such a long flight, curious and wanting to trust.



Ayeshah gave us his vet records and paperwork. We loaded the crate in the van and headed home - he never uttered a sound. We took him to our Vet to make sure that all was well with him. He was amazed at how cooperative and sweet he was after having endured all that travel. Storm got health approval, Bordetella vaccine and we took him home. He was quiet again on the ride home and who could blame him? His life before now had been in a cage in 120 degrees with 2 other dogs, all intact. Photos taken at the “farm” showed scratches on the walls, most likely from boredom and discontent. The “farm” is in Kebd and the Salukis are pictured below. None of these beautiful animals had ever been inside of a home, played with a toy, or enjoyed the affection of a loving family. What Saluki or other animal deserves a life like that?



Photo by John Peleaver

When we arrived home, he willingly accompanied Steve across the driveway and into the backyard. He just stood and looked around. We introduced him to our other Salukis one at a time -their names are Tahlah and Sky. Lots of sniffing took place and then cautious wagging. We decided not to overwhelm him with the introduction of our Italian Greyhounds at that time.



We walked around the property and just watched him as he took in the smells and new sights -green grass, trees, and dirt rather than sand. We tried to imagine what was going through his mind and although we could not we did notice that he seemed happy already. And, then he ran a bit! We were so delighted for him. Can you imagine being in a cage for 6 years and then to experience freedom to move, run, enjoy! We brought him into the house and introduced him to a dog bed. He had no idea as to what it was and it took him 3 days to dare to lie on it.



I've been told that the training methods in the Middle East can be harsh. We're sure that was true in his case as he is still frightened by anything new. His potty habits are impeccable and his acceptance of food by hand is extremely gentle. If a dog can be so, he is very polite.

We've been asked if he had language problems and although we really don't know, we would guess that he did not. He is a dog, after all and we think that he sensed our gestures and voice inflections. He seemed to know his name and in an amazingly short time seemed to understand cues.

We've also been asked if there were problems. No problems were encountered with the health check, vet paperwork, etc. No problems in falling in love with him right away. No problems in integrating him into our pack. He is gentle with all and the Italian Greyhounds as well as the Salukis trust him. The problems were actually with US as we wanted him to quickly put the traumas of having lived in a cage for so long behind him and for him to realize that he would never have to endure that situation again. We had to adjust to letting him progress at his own pace. I keep reminding myself that he had so many years of living the other way and not even a year yet of living this way.

He was much more guarded with Steve than me. We don't know if that is because women were kinder to him than men and I don't think that we will ever know. He greets me with smiles each morning. I have never seen a dog smile the way that he does. His tail wags non-stop as I prepare his morning meal. He then happily goes out the door and enjoys the backyard. He doesn't venture far as his many insecurities still plague him but in time we hope that there will be less and less of those.

Having acquired our other two Salukis from reputable breeders we do notice the similarities. He loves to run and play with them. He loves to chase squirrels and bunnies (thankfully, most escape). Tahlah and Sky are more independent - he does need encouragement many times and is still leery of new situations. But, the joy we have experienced as we watch this amazing boy "bloom" is hard to put into words. Not a day goes by that we don't feel grateful for giving him a chance. And, he shows us his gratitude with kisses and smiles. I forgot to mention that he adjusted to the winter here remarkably well – he loved the snow! We were enthralled watching him run and play in it.



STOLA and Animal Friends League of Kuwait have given Storm and a few other Salukis the chance to experience happiness and love. We can not thank them enough and in our hearts, we know that Storm feels the same way. He was adopted by us in August, 2008.



Jozee 218E & Loki 219E

Jozee and Loki have been with me just shy of two years. Jozee is an independent, but loving girl. She has mellowed quite a bit. Loki is much slower to trust people. He is a happy-go-lucky boy when in the yard with his mother Jozee.



Najat 261E

Najat is such a wonderful addition to our family, she is the sweetest girl. Everyone who meets her adores her. There were times I thought one of the vet techs at our vet office was going to kidnap her because she is so taken with Najat.

When Najat looks at me, she wags her tail, her eyes light up, and she shoots me a Saluki smile.

Najat used to duck when I would pet her on the head. I believe when she was living on her own in Kuwait, she must have been hit often by people. Najat no longer ducks, but instead when she sees my hand moving towards her head, she scoots in closer hoping to get a neck massage.

The first day Najat picked up a toy and took off in anticipation that someone was going to chase her to play was a welcome sight. When Najat first arrived, she did not seem to really understand what toys were all about, now each day she carefully selects her favorites from the toy chest.

Najat often curls up in a ball no matter where she is sleeping, bed, couch or chair. I think she may have gotten in this habit when she was living on her own in Kuwait so she could keep warm at night with her own body heat.

Shakara 276E

Shakara is a delight....she loves children and everyone..particularly men. When the vet was here the other day, she was so delighted to see him she was dancing around him.

Shakara sleeps next to me so closely I can hardly move, she manages to get her face close to mine, she is friendly, and sometimes a complete clown. She often sneaks off to find a comfortable bed or sofa to lounge on.

Shakara arrived here with a special toy..a large stuffed crab with a squeaker. The crab is quite a sight with a yellow fluffy body and purple legs...she hauls this everywhere with her....never lets it out of her sight. Shakara has really settled into the household, she is very sociable, in fact she has been easier than many other rescues I have adopted.



Sagan 275E

Sagan has been a blessing - John, I, and Topaz are crazy about him. He's still shy, but we have been working on socialization, and he's coming out of his shell little by little. He communicates well. When he has to go out (before his regularly scheduled time), he stands at the door. When he's hungry, he pushes his food bowl towards us. He's amazingly smart, funny, and complex.

Today he went into play bow - another rare treat. He's coming along just great. He has attached himself to me and to the house.

I don't know how long, if ever, it will take for him to get past his tentativeness - he's still very scared of many things. But each day he gets more and more confident. We adore him, and I'm pretty sure the feeling is mutual.

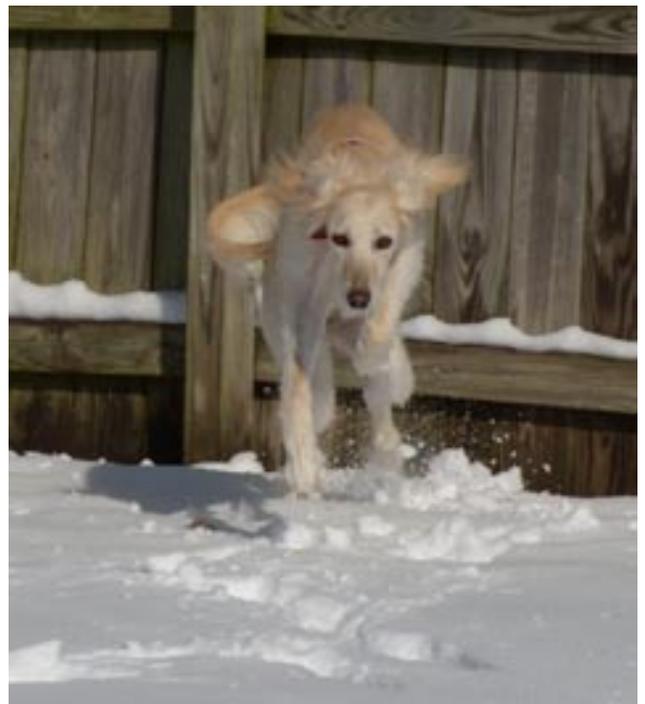


Kenna 270E

Kenna has settled in well. She was very shy at first, but has really come out of her shell. Her quiet demeanor adds to the image of innocence, but she can get into mischief when she wants to... usually with the help of Beyda my other Saluki. She is constantly wagging her tail and seems to be very happy. She has a couple of stuffed animals that she enjoys tossing up in the air and then pouncing on them. The first time she played, I knew that she finally felt at home. She enjoys her walks, but is still very skittish around strangers and bikes. We are working on that. Inside she is not as shy, especially if that stranger has treats! Food changes her attitude, that's for sure.

She enjoyed her very first snow this year, and she was like a jack-rabbit, bouncing around the back yard. She didn't want her feet to be in it.

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Gabriel 262E (formerly Hilal)

I can't believe it has just been a year since we adopted Gabriel. As you can see in the pic, we have been able to thicken him up a bit - his buddy Zelda makes sure it all turns to muscle. She never leaves him alone :) Even still he changes daily. No longer the shy pup he was, he has learned to speak up and let us know just what he wants. We take him to quite a few events as we live downtown and he is getting to be known as a regular. Not too many Salukis in this area and he is such a beautiful boy so he stands out quite a bit and he relishes all the extra attention. You did a wonderful job matching us. He is goofy, sweet and smart and soooo well behaved. We couldn't ask for a better pup!



Recent 2009 Rescues from the U.S.

- 283C Pookie - shelter rescue
- 284C Cornelia - owner surrender
- 285C Calypso - rescue from a shelter
- 286E Artemis - rescue from a shelter
- 287E Dante - rescue from a shelter
- 288E Napoleon - cooperative placement
- 289E Mac - cooperative placement

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Mr. Bark says.....

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