



A blind girl we call Smilin' Sam



**Beagle
collection**



**Recent
arrivals**



Togetherness



Steve and Alayne with Tibby, who has deformed back legs. She and her brother, Fibby, both have pupils that are fixed at the top of the eye rather than the center. They can see just fine, but it gives them an unusual and soulful look!

Dear Friends,

Summer is almost here! After a long winter that lasts for us from November until mid-April, when the snow finally melts, we and the animals are thrilled to see bare ground and green grass again!

We wrote in our winter edition that we had seen a significant drop-off in donations last fall as the economy cratered. Well, we're delighted to report that we were blessed to have a record number of gifts in December, and we ended the year down only about 11% compared to the previous year. Given the economic situation and how things looked in the fall, we were relieved at that outcome.

We expect this year will prove just as challenging for the economy as last year. We have planned accordingly and continue to reduce our operating expenses. Our most significant cash-saving step was not replacing employees when they left – one last fall and the second this spring – so it's now just the two of us doing everything again! (If we're not quite as fast to return phone calls or respond to emails, we hope you'll understand why!)

We've also taken other actions to cut costs, such as combining our spring and summer newsletters into this one edition to save on printing and postage costs.

Our objective is to use your donations as wisely, and effectively, as we can for the benefit of the animals at the ranch. As always, we are *incredibly grateful* for your gifts that make this place possible.

On behalf of Samantha, Austin, Dexter, and all the other amazing disabled animals here, **thank you for your continued support for them!**

Alayne Marker and Steve Smith, Co-founders

P.S. Don't forget, small monthly donations can really make a difference over time, and they're easy to set up on our secure online donations Web page.

Make a gift for the animals

There are many ways you can help the animals:

- Make a **cash donation**. You can mail a check, make a secure online donation at our Web site, or call us to process a credit card donation over the phone.
- Donate **stock** (we can work with your broker on the details).
- Make a **bequest** to the sanctuary in your will.

The Beagle collection



This was the scene in our living room one afternoon this past winter. Steve had just added some more wood to the fire. He looked over and noticed this collection of Beagles, all snoozing and enjoying the warmth from the woodstove, which is just off to the right of the photo.

That's blind Widget in the chair, blind Briggs on the cot to the left and then blind Austin.

After hearing all the clicks of the shutter (Steve always takes multiple photos, which gives even the blind camera hogs plenty of time to get to the action), Widget popped up from the chair. Yes, she's a camera hog alright. Striking the right pose, she seemed to be saying, "Oh, you must be here to take my photo again. How's this?"

Although it may seem like we have a lot of Beagles at the ranch, they're actually tied for second place with Labs at four each. The Dachshunds are in first place with seven total. But Beagles



and Dachshunds are definitely tied for first when it comes to boisterous personalities!



2008 annual report now online

We have posted our 2008 annual report on our Web site's **In The News** page. It's a 3-page PDF. We are not printing a hard copy this year to save money, so please check it out online.

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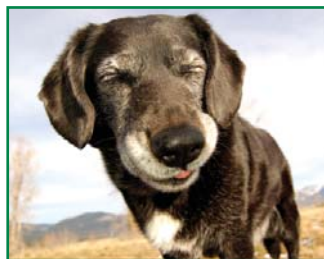
A blind girl we call Smilin' Sam

Samantha belonged to a long-haul truck driver named Kathy. As the years went by, Samantha grew weary of the trucker's life. She finally got to the point where she refused to get in the truck after a rare visit home, and Kathy had to pick Samantha up and put her in the cab.

Kathy said, "Sam was good protection and good company on the road, but it was a prison for her, too."

After Samantha lost her vision, Kathy thought it was no longer safe or feasible to take her newly blind dog with her. She tried to find a different kind of job so she could stay home, but had no luck. She finally took another truck driver position in a different state, but with a company that didn't allow dogs on their trucks.

Before leaving, she gave Samantha to family members and asked them to take care of her for 6 weeks until she could make other arrangements. The family members had two small children and a dog who didn't get along with Samantha. Within days Samantha was at the local shelter.



The shelter asked if we could take an elderly, blind dog. Once Samantha arrived at the ranch, the first thing we noticed was just how cheerful this girl was. She wagged her tail and followed us everywhere with a big smile on her gray face. We called her "Smilin' Sam." Her eyes are bright and clear, and you'd never know from looking at her that she can't see a thing.

A couple of months after Samantha came, we received a letter in the mail, along with a \$50 money order. It was from Kathy, and she had learned what happened to Samantha. She saw our blog post about Samantha's arrival, and wrote: "It is good to see her and know she is well and being cared for by loving people. The pictures made me cry twice."

She promised to continue donating for Samantha's care, and every month since then, another \$50 money order arrives in the mail.

Samantha is a sweetheart of a dog, and these days she loves spending her days outside, exploring our yards. She's so happy to be at the Rolling Dog and not, shall we say, rolling down the highway.

Recent arrivals

Austin the blind Beagle

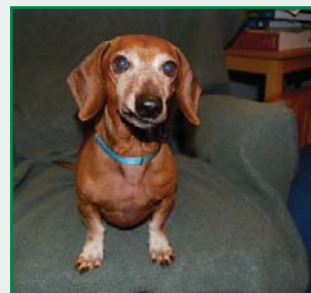


Austin came to us from a Beagle rescue group in Atlanta, Georgia. As a blind Beagle, they rated his adoption chances there as "slim to none," and asked if we could take him. He was so small when he arrived we thought he was still a puppy, but it turns out he was full grown – just tiny! Austin is like everybody's kid brother, tagging

along behind other dogs just wanting to play. He has a loud, deep baying voice that is way too big for his little body. We watch him bay and wonder, "Where is all that noise coming from?" When he's not busy trying to stir things up with another dog, he loves to sit and chew on a toy. But only until something more interesting comes along.

Dexter the elderly Dachshund

The email to us had a subject line that said "Doxie 69244 in need of rescue!" It came from the foster coordinator for an SPCA in Davis, California, that had sent us a number of disabled animals over the years. She wrote, "I know it's a long shot, but no one else can take this sweet boy because of his age." She wanted to know if we could possibly take him.



He wasn't actually disabled, just elderly, but we're known for having a soft spot for Dachshunds – and we agreed to take him. Because he didn't exactly meet our criteria for disabilities, we decided to assign him one – a hearing disorder common to Dachshunds. It's called CSH, or Canine Selective Hearingitis. He *does* seem to have it, oddly enough.



His jaw can't move but his legs sure can

Back in March, when we had plenty of snow on the ground, Steve watched our disabled dog Travis running

a steeplechase course around our main dog building, leaping over the fences as he went. Travis has a fused jaw from a rare muscle disease, but that doesn't keep him from being an exceptionally athletic and agile dog. Moreover, Travis loves to show off his talents for any nearby human. Steve came back with the camera, pointed to the nearest fence, and said, "Okay, go for it!" And Travis did. Over and over again.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Visit our Web sites at RollingDogRanch.org and BlindHorses.org



That's Alayne with blind Cash, who first arrived at the ranch as a tiny 4-week old foal back in 2007. He turned two years old this spring, and as you can see, he's grown into a handsome young horse!

About the sanctuary

The Rolling Dog Ranch Animal Sanctuary is home to many types of disabled animals. Our residents include blind dogs, blind horses, deaf dogs, blind cats, and animals with other neurological and orthopedic disabilities.

Although these animals may have disabilities, they do not consider themselves handicapped. They just want to get on with life and enjoy themselves. Thanks to the support of the sanctuary's friends, that's what they get to do here.

Yet these are the animals who are the least likely to be adopted and among the most likely to be euthanized in traditional shelters. That's why we focus on the disabled.

Steve Smith and Alayne Marker founded the sanctuary in 2000 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization known as a private operating foundation. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

The ranch covers 160 acres of grassland in the Blackfoot River valley of western Montana. The sanctuary cares for about 70 animals, and is supported 100% by donations. Thank you for your kindness!

Togetherhness

There is one favorite spot in the cat house during the cool months, and that's in front of the heater that keeps the cottage toasty warm. But the cats don't exactly lounge there, sprawled around the heater. No, they're always bunched up tightly, like sardines in a can.

Sometimes, as in this photo, you can have one sardine we mean feline squished in facing backwards:



More commonly, you'll get a larger group of cats facing the same direction, like this:



It looks like they're watching something off to the left, but really, there wasn't anything going on over there!

Now, there *are* plenty of other beds and cat trees scattered about the cat house, but there's just no place better than right next to the heater, sharing the warmth with your friends!