

2010

PUPPIES FROM PARADISE

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Life without our girls, HoneyBear and DaisyDawg, is unthinkable. I know that someday, they'll be leaving us for the great dog run in the sky, but I sure don't like to think about it.

The Bear follows PegEgg, and DaisyDawg follows me wherever I go.

HoneyBear is a black, although more and more gray, Maltese-Shih Tzu mix. When she's awake, she's alive; exploring the worlds around her. When she sleeps, it's a sound, don't-bother-me, death-like, snoring event.

We, almost, didn't get HoneyBear.

We had gone to C.A.R.E. (Critter Adoption & Rescue Effort), a local organization in Ruskin, Florida, that finds homes for displaced dogs and cats.

The secretary told us they had just gotten a call from a veterinarian's office saying they had a puppy for adoption. Her previous owner took her to the veterinarian's office and just left her.

I'm the kind of person that attracts puppies. If I'm within 50 feet, they seem to want to run up to me to get petted. HoneyBear ignored both me and PegEgg. HoneyBear just stood at the office door looking through the glass as if expecting her owner to return.

We agreed to take her home for the weekend and if she didn't warm up to us, we'd bring her back. But when she got to our home, she suddenly realized that we were offering her a home. She began wagging her tail, running all over the house and — finding the doggie door on her own — searched the yard for just the perfect spot to relieve herself. (She has never relieved herself in the house.)

She came to me with her tail wagging 100 miles per hour, and rolled over to get her belly scratched. Then she jumped into PegEgg's lap. We formed a bond that has held forever.

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As my shadow, DaisyDawg is a comfort and is forever needing a reassuring hug. She's a Rat Terrier and is faster than the eye can see.

She's a trained circus performer from a circus family of dogs. She can jump through fire, climb ladders, and perform a multitude of tricks. The problem is that she's afraid of people.

Since it turns out that one can not perform in a circus with no people in attendance her trainers sought a new home for her. At exactly that time, we were looking for a companion for our puppy, HoneyBear, and a friend told us about them and told them about us.

She may be afraid of people, but she's not afraid of any animal. She's as ready to take on a rottweiler as she is to attack the armadillo that we see on our 4 AM walks around the circle of homes where we live.

At our first meeting, my wife, PegEgg, fell in love with Daisy.

Daisy's name at the time was Gracie, but we realized that name just didn't fit her as well as Daisy May. Somewhere along the line, I realized that she was more aptly titled DaisyDawg, so that's what I call her.

(Confidentially, I think I could call her Maxine and she'd come to me.)

I go to bed around midnight, and get up at 4 AM. PegEgg goes to bed at or around 2–3 AM, and gets up at 9 AM.

When I go to bed, DaisyDawg goes with me. She has trained me to lay on my side (facing PegEgg's side) with my right arm up so she can snuggle against my arm and against my chest. With her head on PegEgg's pillow, she's Queen of the Bed — at least, until HoneyBear comes to bed.

In the winter — and winters are so very cold here in Florida — she sleeps under the blankets. She prefers the electric blanket set at 7.

HoneyBear stays up with PegEgg and follows her to bed. HoneyBear, independent pup that she is, prefers to sleep at the end of the bed uninterrupted with any movements (such as turning over) that might occur at the head of the bed.

Almost every morning, the girls and I walk three times around the 1/4 mile circle of homes where we live. HoneyBear is the Alpha Dog so she leads, and DaisyDawg is happy to follow. HoneyBear has to "mark" every yard, but

DaisyDawg just wants to sniff the morning news reports of other dogs who have the audacity to travel on her circle of homes.

They are barker dogs, so we don't have to worry about anyone sneaking up on the house.

We do love these puppies, and they have blessed us with love, lickings and hugging — sometimes when we didn't even know we needed them. It's amazing how a 13-pound giggling puppy can brighten your darkest moments, and serve to remind you that this moment will end; but, a brighter moment is just a hug away.

The morning mist must be rolling in because my eyes are getting moist.