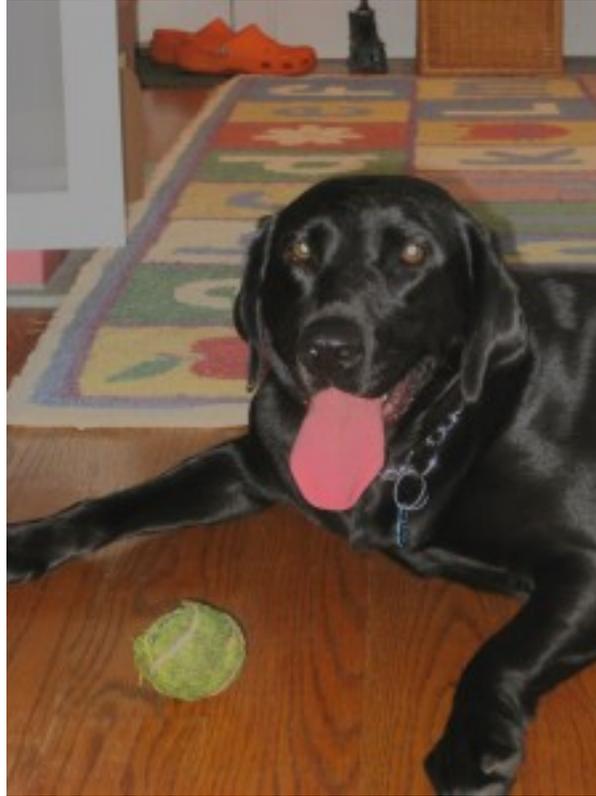


For the love of dogs

October 7, 2009 at 4:24 pm by **Mary Himes**



My beautiful rescued lab with her ever-present tennis ball

I grew up with Labrador Retrievers- two black and one yellow. I loved them all. Some kids have blankies, I had dogs. Over the years, I've tossed around the idea of getting a dog, but whenever I carefully analyzed my life I just couldn't see how I could maintain a sane life with a dog. When my husband decided to run for Congress I thought that maybe, if he won, we would get a dog. So, in the depths of the campaign when my two daughters asked for the thousandth time to get a dog, I offered them the "possibility" of getting one IF their daddy won the election.

The girls didn't forget my "sort of" promise, even with all the excitement surrounding my husband's election win. And,

they wanted a puppy. Who can blame them? Spend any time looking at pictures of puppies of any breed and you'll fall in love. But, I knew that caring for a puppy was more than I could handle and decided that with so many dogs in need of rescue, it would be better to adopt. Plus, I figured that if I was going to turn my life upside down, it might as well be for a really good cause.

Thankfully, there are several terrific rescue/adoption organizations in our area. I chose to work with Killingworth, CT based [Labs4rescue](#), which deals with Labrador Retrievers. An all volunteer non-profit organization, [Labs4rescue](#) is dedicated to providing a new life for rescued or displaced Labs or Lab Mixes. When I looked at their website, I was shocked to see how many gorgeous dogs were up for adoption. Most of them come from the South because, according to [Labs4rescue](#), there the spay/neuter laws are not enforced and since female labs have litters of 10-12 puppies, there are just too many labs running around. There are also a lot of puppy mills and not enough demand so dogs that aren't good duck hunters are "surrendered" at the end of the hunting season. Black labs are particularly at risk, perhaps because they shed black hair. What is really heartbreaking is that many dogs are sent to the high kill shelters that only keep them for three days before they are gassed.

After three weeks of working through [Labs4rescue](#) I found Bella, a beautiful, loving, fully house and crate trained 1.5 year old black lab rescued from Tennessee. She was transported, courtesy of Labs4rescue to Connecticut. She is a quintessential lab- she is patient beyond words with kids, loves food of any sort, wants and gives a ton of love, and is rarely seen without a disgusting tennis ball in her mouth. I will admit right up front that she has some health issues but nothing that can't be handled thanks to our terrific

veterinarians at VCA Davis Animal Hospital. And, I promise that the love this dog gives is more than most- I really think she feels lucky to have been saved.

So, if you're thinking about getting a dog, please consider adopting one. You can adopt any age, from puppy to senior. Conveniently, most adoption organizations list their available dogs on their websites and most host local adoption events where you can go see the dogs in person. In fact, Adopt-a-Dog is hosting its annual Putting on the Dog fun dog show on Sunday October 18th at Roger Sherwin Baldwin Park in Greenwich (<http://www.adopt-a-dog.org/POD2009.htm>) Throughout the day there will be a dog show with seventeen categories, such as Biggest Lap Dog, K-9 Krooners, A Pooch Who Can Smooch, and Clever K-9 Tricks amongst other fun activities for the family. There are so many dogs out there looking for a safe, loving home- many of them are as terrific as Bella. Please don't forget them.

LOCAL PET ADOPTION ORGANIZATIONS:

Adopt-a-dog, Greenwich, 629-9494; adopt-a-dog.org

Bridgeport Animal Control Facilities, Bridgeport, 576-7727; bptanimalcontrol.com

Oxford Animal Shelter, Oxford, 881-3653

Pet Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), Norwalk, 750-9572; pawsct.org

Save Our Strays, Westport, 255-0514; saveourstraysinc.petfinder.com

Shelton Animal Shelter, Shelton, 924-2501

Stamford Animal Care and Control, Stamford, 977-4437