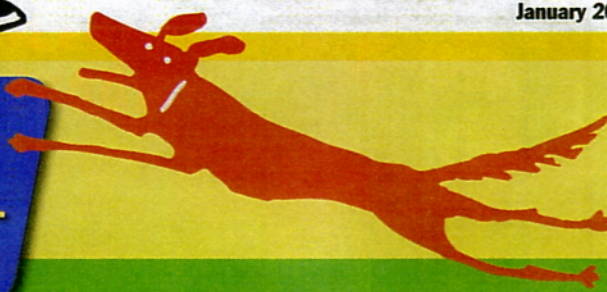


# fetch THE PAPER



FOR BAY AREA PETS & THEIR PEOPLE

## WONDER DOGS: The Benefits of Loving a Senior

With the start of the new year, many of us are resolving to add a furry new member to our families. But while visions of cute puppies dance in our heads, we fail to visualize the aftermath: puddles on the carpet, chewed shoes and weeks of puppy training classes.

Take heart: if you're thinking about adopting a dog this year, you can do it without dealing with the noise, mess and exhaustion of a puppy. Instead, consider adopting a senior dog.

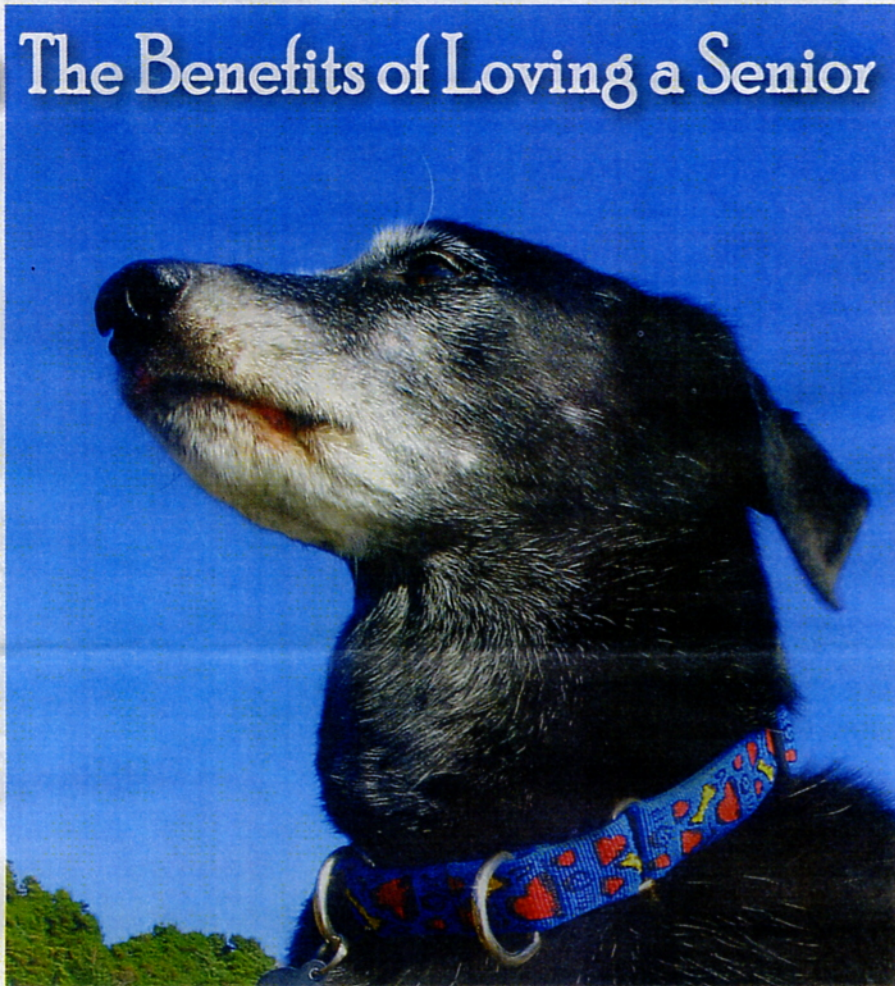
### Senior dogs have passed the test of time

In fact, seniors provide all kinds of practical rewards that puppies can't match. They've learned good habits, their personalities are set, and they're mellower than puppies.

"Older dogs are already housetrained and leash-trained," said Teri Goodman, founder of the Senior Dogs Project. "They're calm, they know how to behave as a member of a pack, and they have a good attention span for training."

These qualities will be valuable if you don't have the time or inclination to train a puppy in those all-important skills like not peeing on the floor or barking at Grandma.

Sherri Franklin is the Director of Muttville, an organization that finds homes for senior dogs. She told FETCH that her number one reason for loving seniors is that they're already set in their ways. "What you see is what you get," she commented. "Their personalities are there."



By contrast, a puppy hasn't fully developed into who he'll become. Your puppy might grow into a dog who can't be dissuaded from digging up your daffodils or chewing the couch cushions. A senior dog's habits and needs are easier to figure out, because they're already established.

Seniors also require less energy than a puppy. Of course we all love to watch that indefatigable puppy play - the recent popularity of the online Shiba Inu

puppy webcam proves that - but it becomes a lot more tiring when we're expected to join in.

"It's all about mellowness," Franklin confirmed. "Having had dogs of all ages, I would never have a dog under three or four years old at my house again. It would make me crazy. But I can have 12 seniors at my house and they don't make me crazy. Add one younger dog to the mix and the energy level becomes out of control."

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## Myth: Senior dogs come with all kinds of health problems.

Sure, seniors have specific health needs. So do puppies! But a little preventative care and attention to diet can help a lot.

"Health issues related to aging will arise with an older dog, though not with every older dog; and it's important to note that young dogs can develop serious and costly health problems, as well," Goodman said. "Before adopting an older dog, you



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Shelby is delighted to be in her forever home.

can have your vet do a health check to get a fix on whether the dog has any existing health problems that may be costly to treat."

Franklin confirmed that it's always a good idea to get a vet checkup. "You'll need to get the dog's teeth checked out," she said. "And a lot of times, a senior dog needs a special diet. They might need added fatty acids, or special supplements for arthritis."

## Dogs are just as sweet and lovable in their golden years as they were in their golden poodle years.

She added, "Senior dogs may also have lowered energy, and it's really good take them to the vet find out how much exercise they should get."

## Senior dogs are great for seniors and families too!

People of all ages will be rewarded by adopting a senior.

"Some people adopt seniors because they know that their commitment isn't going to last for 18

years, it's going to be less time," said Franklin. "It's good for students, or people who are retiring and they want to travel, but not for a while. They want an older dog to keep them company, but they don't want to make a ten-year commitment."

Franklin continued, "The other people that really adopt from me a lot are people that had two senior dogs and one passed away. They want another dog to keep their dog active and keep it company."

But don't underestimate the benefits of senior dogs for senior citizens. "I do a Seniors for Seniors program," Franklin said. "There are a couple of reasons why seniors adopt seniors. For one thing, they don't want a dog that's going to outlive them, because they worry about what will happen to the dog. Then, they want the companionship, but they don't want to go through puppy training. They don't want to go to the dog park with a bunch of big dogs. They just want someone to keep them company. A couch potato!"



just fine, and Triscuit is already playful with them! I think Triscuit knows she's in her forever home. She is so comfortable and easy-going. I feel very fortunate."

Lauren Schilling recently adopted Shelby, a senior

## Senior dogs have learned good habits, their personalities are set, and they're mellower than puppies.

### Senior dogs are as loving and cuddly as puppies; perhaps more so

Anyone who's lived with a dog through the animal's lifetime knows that dogs are just as sweet and lovable in their golden years as they were in their golden poodle years. In fact, once that puppyish enthusiasm and energy dies down, many dogs become even more cuddly and loving with their people. And any dog that you love will change your life for the better.

"I had a woman who adopted one of my dogs," Franklin remembered, "who told me afterward that

Pomeranian from Muttville.

"I feel that she rescued me, just as much as I rescued her!" Schilling wrote. "She has been a constant source of comfort and joy."

Patty Stanton's son was ready for his first dog. After shopping around, they found Frankie at Muttville. He was in bad shape at first, but Stanton's family was ready for the challenge, and their choice paid off.

"Frankie has enriched our lives," Stanton wrote. "Older dogs are more emotionally mature and I think Frankie is grateful. I'm glad to be able to give him a good life. He is part of giving me my own good life!"

## No time like the present.

If you'd like to learn more about adopting a senior, you can visit the Muttville website at [www.muttville.org](http://www.muttville.org), or the Senior Dogs Project site at [www.srdogs.com](http://www.srdogs.com). You can also contact your local shelters to learn about their adoptable seniors. 🐾



Kris Larson is the managing editor for *FETCH*. She works in the Bay Area as a journalist and music critic, and lives with an imaginary Golden Retriever named Honey. Please visit her web site at [krislarson.cementhorizon.com](http://krislarson.cementhorizon.com).

# BULLETIN BOARD

## In Memory of Flash

6/15/89 to 3/24/08

Vicki and Flash (the cat)

It took me 6 mos. to do this because this year I lost you. So many tears fell on the paper, and almost 19 years of adventure and love, the happiest years of my life. But, God kept you safe all that time and I am grateful. See you at the Rainbow Bridge Boo Boo Bear  
Love Mom, Dad, Mercy and Powder



## The FETCH Bulletin Board

Celebrate your adoption, or honor a pet who has passed away. Your pet memory or adoption notice is FREE. Send your announcement (about 50 words) and a photo (high resolution digital for print, or we can scan a print for you). Please make sure to include your name(s) and, for adoption announcements, the source (shelter or rescue). Send your submission to [BulletinBoard@fetchthepaper.com](mailto:BulletinBoard@fetchthepaper.com) and provide your contact information in case we need to reach you. We also include volunteer requests and paid advertisements in the Bulletin Board. Just email us or call 707-540-9041 for more information.

## The World According to Freya



Told to Elaine B. Holtz

Bark when you need to bark.  
Lick a friend at least once a day.  
Cuddle up on a lap with someone that you know will pet you.  
Get a treat whenever you can.  
Begging is OK.  
Nap as often as possible on a soft pillow.  
Don't take anything seriously - it all passes anyway.

Freya's Caregivers: Elaine Holtz and Ken Norton