

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

And Along Came 'Sonny'.

Last week I wrote about people and the grieving process when having to say goodbye to one of our pets. Our Pet was that left was 'Lola". She was loving, quirky, snuggly, and usually out of sync. Mike, my husband would often tell her to 'Get with the program'.

We miss her. Chip, our dog, misses her. There is an empty space in our home. An empty chair where she sat. An empty spot in bed. When I let Chip out, I find myself still waiting for Lola to slowly go out. Chip acted uncertain about the empty spot. He was more-clingy with Mike and me. We found ourselves making sure that Chip was with one of us as much as possible and that he got more hugs than usual.

Then along came Sonny. It was time to bring another dog into our home. The Northwoods Humane Society was bring in 21 dogs from Texas all of who were scheduled to be euthanized because a lack of space and overcrowding at various shelter. There is a non-profit organization that is in the northern part of Texas that works with rural shelters with high euthanasia rates. They take dogs from these shelters, house them in foster care situations and arrange for transfers to shelters like ours. They come vaccinated, heartworm tested and vet checked. Some are spayed or neutered. They usually send us small dogs as potential adopters in our area are often looking for small dogs. Some of the dogs that we received in the last transfer were housed at the shelter and the majority went into foster homes.

I knew our family was ready for another dog. I filled out the preadoption on-line, got approval from the shelter to adopt. I went to the shelter and met Sonny, I brought Chip to the shelter for a meet and greet and all went very well. My friend who has a dog that we have in our home often also met Sonny and it went okay. I paid my fee, the staff person (Jamie) went over the paperwork with me and now it was time to go home. Sonny eagerly got in the car, let Chip have his favorite spot in the car and home we went. Sonny met our cat Belle and it was like they had known each other for years. Mike and Sonny were an instant match and our home is filled with a new energy.

Yes, pets can grieve the loss of another pet, and the grieving process can vary from pet to pet. According to an ASPCA study, more than 60% of pets experience behavioral changes after losing a companion. Some signs that your pet may be grieving include:

- Changes in appetite: Pets may eat less or more slowly, or they may not eat well without companionship
- Changes in vocalization: Pets may bark, meow, howl, or cry more than usual, or they may make sad sounds in places the deceased pet liked
- Changes in personality: Pets may become more clingy or aloof, or they may start searching for the lost pet
- Changes in sleep patterns: Pets may sleep more or have insomnia
- Changes in grooming or bathroom habits: Cats may be more likely to scratch furniture or urinate outside the litter box

- Changes in where they spend time: Pets may prefer to spend time in the deceased pet's favorite spots

Grief is a process, not an event, and can last for weeks, months, or even years. You can try to help your pet by reassuring them with love and praise or maybe bringing a new pet into your family.

Dates to Save: August 5 – Tag Day

August 30 – Bark and Roll and the Cat's Meow Auction – Seeley Sawmill Saloon – 6:30 to 9 pm