



This column is guest written by Alice Gordon about her fostering of senior rescue Tov. Due to his age and ill health, Tov was placed in permanent foster care with her. Alice kindly cared for Tov until his last days. He left this world on New Years day, 2011, with Alice at his side.

Tov



By Alice Gordon

It was just about a year ago to the day that the big black hairy Tov adopted me. We never knew much about his life before the Humane Society received him. Just that his previous owner had died. The people

handling the estate were cruel and heartless and he had been picked up after he had been put out on the street like trash.

It started for me with a call from BSDRT rep Gail O'Neil – could I go to the Longmont Humane Society and see if a dog they had was a Belgian Sheepdog.

At the shelter, LHS employee Kim took me to the back kennel area. Tov, who had been a Service Dog, was in the last cage in the room. Kim unlocked it, I saw him, and he put his head next to my thigh and looked at me. I was hooked. We then checked him out with cats and he tolerated them. Then back to the cage - as we walked out he howled into my heart – “save me!”

Gail came up from Denver and handled the paperwork.

Tov pranced out - so happy - into Gail's van with some help. We stopped somewhere - can't remember where - and Tov had climbed into the passenger's seat. He was telling us “I Have Arrived!”

A few days later Vickie Marie, Gail and I took him in for a bath. He was filthy - the Humane Society had him down as an intact male. We discovered that the “balls” were poop balls. Vickie did the detail work on cleaning that up. We were all exhausted.

Meanwhile at home, my cat, Baby, was really pissed. She had no intention of being herded! She did not like a new animal in her territory. Especially one that was 60 pounds



heavier and still smelled weird. They grew to tolerate each other. It took about 6 months for Baby to sleep on my bed (her normal place) - since Tov had taken up residence on the floor at the bottom of the bed.

Tov and I walked in the park each day - eventually a mile or more. It was good for his weight - he went from 74 pounds to about 55 over about seven or eight months. One evening we were walking at dusk, the park was busy with all four baseball diamonds in use. Suddenly Tov stopped, turned behind me in a protective stance, lowered his head and looked at a man that had been walking behind. That guy veered off and was gone. No wolf was going to get his sheep (me)!

Another evening at home I was getting ready for bed and took off my earrings. One fell to the floor and rolled under the bed. So down I went on my knees and flatter, flashlight in hand. Tov did not like that and came over trying to get me up and out from under the bed. He was insistent!! Never did find that earring.

One day he needed another bath and I took him to Paws 2 Groom in Longmont (located next to Hobby Lobby

and roughly across the street from the Boulder County Fair Grounds). It was a chore for me since I had recently gotten my wrist out of a cast. The owner came over to lend a hand - she said that a few years ago she used to pick up a Belgian from a lady named Susan and groom him, bathe, clip nails, and the whole nine yards. She said that that Belgian was much larger and that his name was Tov. Bingo - same dog just a few years older. She was excited and so pleased to see him. It was like a party at the Grooming place. She told me about the owner, Susan. Susan was badly crippled and on oxygen. Tov was her life and treasure. She had lost her husband in 2005 and apparently a son in Iraq. She loved Tov dearly and it was evident that he loved her. Susan had him groomed and cared for routinely by Paws 2 Groom and they loved him too. They showed me his file and thus we came to know that in October 2007, he was 11 years old. No info on his vet or his pedigree.

In 2010 he was 14 years old (or maybe even 15), but he had a great year with me. My favorite memory was one day he was sitting on the upper deck in the back yard. Sitting up like a prince, ears up, smiling that Belgian grin, watching me as I cleaned up poop from the grass. I swear he was laughing. From then on he was the Prince of Poop! Too short a reign - exit the Prince.

Over the holidays Tov started vomiting. I fed him homemade chicken soup and that worked for a while. A vet visit on December 30 showed a tumor near or in his small intestine. He was so sick. We tried a bland diet - by January 1 he stopped eating and drinking. The blood work showed pancreatitis. It was time to say good-bye to this wonderful old Belgian. The vet came to the house and with great dignity, care and gentleness eased him to the next world. Vickie said that his Susan was there to guide him to the wherever. Susan was always his momma. They are together now.

