

# *valley* PETS

SMALL PAWS, BIG HEARTS



**EVERY**  
DOG OWNER  
HAS STUMBLED  
ON THIS SCENE,  
A LARGE, HAIRY BEAST  
LUXURIOUSLY  
SPRAWLED OUT,  
ONE PERPENDICULAR  
FOOT PROCLAIMING THE  
PERFECTION  
OF HIS BLISSED-OUT  
STATE. IT'S A SIGHT  
TO MAKE  
ANYONE SMILE,  
NO MATTER HOW  
**CROSS**  
THEY MIGHT BE.  
THIS PHOTO OF  
**DJANGO**  
**SKYY BLUE**  
BASKING IN THE  
MORNING  
SUN VALLEY SUN  
ON THE BED OF OWNERS  
**HOWARD**  
**& PEGGY**  
LOVERING,  
INSTANTLY LIT UP  
THE FACES OF  
**EVERY**  
EXPRESSO WHO  
SAW IT, MAKING  
IT THE UNANIMOUS  
**WINNER**  
OF IDAHO MOUNTAIN EXPRESS'  
**2012**  
VALLEY PETS  
PHOTO CONTEST.

*Winner*

# SHELTER ANIMALS FIND FOREVER HOMES

*Owners say animals chose them*

BY KATHERINE WUTZ  
EXPRESS STAFF WRITER

The year 2012 marks the 30th anniversary of the Animal Shelter of the Wood River Valley, Blaine County's nonprofit, no-kill animal shelter.

Over the past three decades, the shelter has adopted out more than 11,000 pets and has been named one of the top nonprofits in the valley by the readers of the Sun Valley Guide. In addition, a "shelter mutt" was named one of the best breeds to have.

Executive Director Jo-Anne Dixon said the shelter has helped foster a paradigm shift in the area, as valley residents steer away from purebred dogs in favor of a pound puppy.

"People are becoming educated as to the value of shelter animals," she said. "They're learning that there is not always something wrong with the animal, and there are a whole lot [of services] we offer to make sure the adoption sticks."

And stick they did with these four pet owners who recently took in shelter animals. From companion cats to "dogs with issues," these valley residents say the shelter is the way to go when it comes to finding a pet.

ways keeping a cookie in his pocket in case Buster gets distracted and tries to wander off. Above all, he's glad he got a shelter dog.

"They're just such good dogs," he said. "It's like they know they've been rescued."



## LIZ AND ZIGGY

Liz Shumway, a Ketchum resident and ski instructor, said her cats seem to display the same gratitude that Buster does.

"They're just so sweet and loving," she said. "I've been really lucky."

Shumway adopted her most recent cat, Ziggy, at Thunderpaws Pet Shoppe in Ketchum, which sometimes takes in kittens from the shelter and tries to adopt them out. Shumway said she had been considering getting another cat, as her first cat, Pixie, had been getting lonely at home. Pixie had originally been adopted from Thunderpaws as well, so that's where Shumway returned for Pixie's companion.

"When I walked in the first time to look, I saw the kittens in the window," she said. "You know how it is with kittens in the window—they break your heart."

Shumway didn't get a cat that day, but she did return when the shelter offered free adoption on all kittens last October. She went back to Thunderpaws and was quickly "chosen" by Ziggy—then named Darren.

"I picked him up and he was real snuggly and purring," Shumway said. "Instead of being a kitten who wanted to jump out of your arms, he just wanted to hang out."

Immediately, Ziggy and Pixie became the best of friends.

"I brought him home, and he went straight up to Pixie, nose-to-nose," she said. "Within three days, they were snuggling up together."

Shumway said she has always gravitated toward shelter kitties.

"I have no interest in getting a high-end cat," she said. "I think the mutts are the best. The kittens I've allowed to choose me have been fantastic cats."

## BRIDGET AND LIBBY

Ketchum resident Bridget Cimino has a slightly different adoption story. She has been volunteering at the shelter for more than three years and had no intention of

getting a dog when a tiny Jack Russell terrier mix showed up in a kennel one day.

"I saw that cute little face, and I just had to get her," Cimino said. "She had these huge ears, and I think that was it. There was just something about her."

Libby, as Cimino named the puppy, had been transferred from another shelter and proved to be a challenge at first. Cimino hadn't

had a puppy in a long time, and wasn't quite ready for the chewing and housetraining that accompany a young dog. Since her adoption, though, Libby has responded well to training.

"She's a quick learner," Cimino said.

She attributes part of that quickness to Libby's mixed-breed heritage, which is part of the reason she loves shelter dogs. And, like the other pet owners featured here, she admits to a soft spot for animals in need of rescuing.

"When you volunteer at the shelter, you learn to love the homeless," she said.

Adopting a dog hasn't kept Cimino away from the shelter. She still volunteers there almost every day, paying special attention to a pit bull mix named Billie Jean, who's been at the shelter for more than a year.

Cimino said it can be difficult to see the dogs go after she's bonded with them.

"You do get attached to them," she said. "But you'd rather see them get a good home than stay at the shelter." Katherine Wutz: kwutz@mtexpress.com

## JOYCE AND MORGANA

Joyce Valenzano, who works at Chapter One Bookstore in Ketchum, said that after her cat died in 2007, she was cat-less for several years, but began thinking about adopting another feline when she moved to Ketchum last year. She said she was prompted to really start looking when a big Maine coon cat showed up at the Ketchum Korral, where Valenzano had been living for several months. It was a sign, she said.

Though she did not adopt that cat, she went to the shelter and immediately knew that Morgana—then named Midnight—was the cat she would take home.

"She came right down from her bed, looked right in my eyes, and said, 'Take me home,'" she said. "I am convinced she is my old cat come back to me."

Valenzo said the similarities are in coloring, disposition and the bond she immediately felt with the shelter kitty. Morgana seemed to feel the same way.

"I put the carrier on my bed and opened it," she said. "[Morgana] came right out, rolled over, grabbed my face and gave me a kiss."

That was three months ago, and Valenzano said she hasn't regretted the decision to adopt a shelter cat since.

"There are just so many cats and so many animals that are unwanted," she said. "I wanted to do what I could."

## RICK AND BUSTER

Rick Sharbinin, a computer technician in Ketchum, said he had an experience similar to Valenzano's when he adopted his dog, Buster.

"I like the rescue part of it for some reason," he said. "You feel like you're doing a little bit for the world or society or just making the world a little better place. It's something you can do that is sort of magnanimous in a way."

Sharbinin said that when his previous dog, another shelter animal, died, it took him some time to find another pet. And when he decided he was ready, he decided to adopt a dog that was really in need.

"The more they need rescuing, the more I'm inclined to rescue them," he said. "I didn't want a cute little border collie

that would be adopted 10 times over. I wanted a dog with issues."

Buster—then named Todd—is a lab mix that had been at the shelter for more than 200 days when Sharbinin decided to take him home.

Originally, Sharbinin said, he was looking for a dog that was similar in mannerisms and look to his old dog. Though Buster wasn't terribly close, Sharbinin decided the dog needed him.

"Buster needed a home, so I just said, 'What the heck,'" he said. "I asked if I could take him home for the weekend, and he just never went back. Sometimes the dog picks you."

There were a few bumps at first. Unlike his independent first dog, Buster was in desperate need of attention.

"He was very, very needy," Sharbinin said. "Even now, if you look at him sideways, he's right there, saying 'Scratch me, love me.'"

Other than that, Sharbinin has had no real challenges with his food-driven dog. He walks Buster off-leash, al-



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Thur-Mon 8-6

*editor's picks*

# PICTURE PERFECT PETS

The criterion for the Valley Pets' 2012 photo contest was simple: We asked pet owners to show us how much their furry or feathered (or scaled) friend loves to live in the Wood River Valley.

Each and every entry (more than 100 of them) captured a special moment for pet and owner, and we couldn't bear to deprive them all of a moment in the spotlight.

So, in the following pages are as many of our favorites as we could squeeze onto newsprint, placed into fun categories that reflect various elements of why pets (and people) love to live in the Wood River Valley.

In addition, every perky puppy and happy horse put forward by his or her owner can be found on our online gallery at [www.mtexpress.com/pets](http://www.mtexpress.com/pets). And no, we're not being "speciest"—not a single kitty was submitted this year. Cat lovers, consider the gauntlet thrown for 2013.

*Jennifer Tuohy, Valley Pets Editor*

## *Picks from the editor*

THREE PUPPY ENTRIES  
WE JUST COULDN'T LEAVE OUT



**Abby loves being surrounded by children** and especially enjoys her visits to Hemingway Elementary as a Therapy Dog. *Photo by Jana Fitzpatrick*



**Murphy makes a new friend.** *Photo by Brienne Mabry*



**The eyes have it.** For Winston, life in the valley is pure heaven. *Photo by Sarah Sundby*



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The Ketchum/Sun Valley Historical Society recently conducted an independent survey to determine how to inform the Wood River Valley of its programming and ask what type of programming they would like to see.

**The result of the survey found that 88% of people received their information from the Idaho Mountain Express Newspaper.**

After reviewing the numbers, the board of directors opted to increase their advertising in the Express which resulted in a **200% increase in visitors** to the museum this summer.



winners

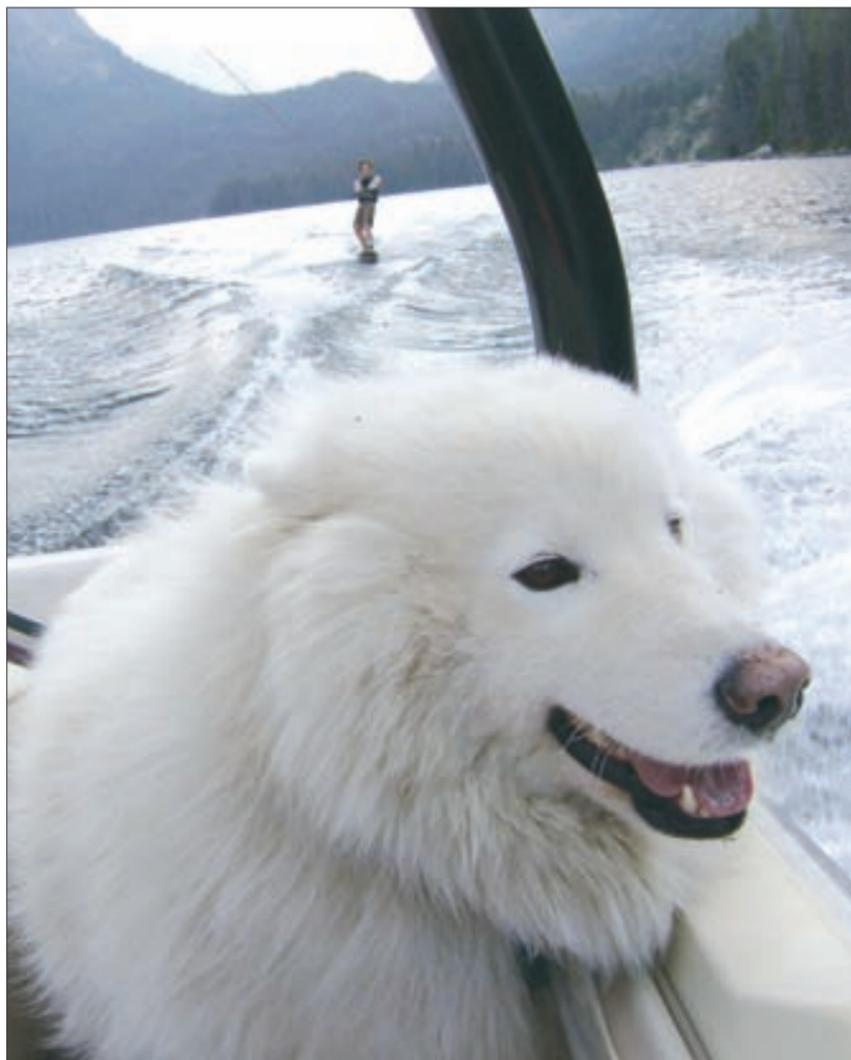


ANGIE HANSEN CAPTURES THE PURE BLISS ON THE FACE OF HER BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG, TETON, AS HE RELAXES IN HIS FAVORITE SPOT, A KAYAK ON REDFISH LAKE.

## Best FISH OUT OF WATER



AN OLD HAND ON THE WATER, WILLY LOVES RAFTING AND CAMPING ALONG HIS FAVORITE IDAHO RIVERS WITH OWNER JANET KELLAM.



CASPER THE SAMOYED WATCHES FOR OBSTACLES ON REDFISH LAKE AS HIS "BROTHER" HANS SKIS BEHIND HIM. PHOTO BY OWNER TED HOWARD.



NASHOBA, A 4-YEAR-OLD SIBERIAN HUSKY, OFTEN IMPERSONATES THE LOCAL MOUNTAIN GOATS ON HER TREKS UP SUN MOUNTAIN WITH OWNER SCOTT TABOR.

## Best MOUNTAIN GOAT IMPERSONATOR



CAMEO STRIKES A POSE AS THE MOON SETS OVER CROY CANYON. "SHE LOVES TO CLIMB UP ON ROCKS AND SCAN THE RIDGES FOR HER COYOTE BOYFRIEND," OWNER SALLY KERN SAID.



ON A CHOCOLATE GULCH HIKE WITH OWNER SUSAN BUCKLEY, ROWDIE PAUSES TO ADMIRE THE VIEW ON A CLEAR DECEMBER DAY.



BRANDY BALDWIN POSES RYDER AGAINST A BLUEBIRD SKY ON A HIKE WITH HIS OWNERS ERIKA HANSON AND MERRITT BALDWIN.

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*Winner*

CRASH KEEPS A CLOSE EYE ON CALDER ZARKOS. "IT REPRESENTS MY PET'S ENJOYMENT OF LIFE IN THE VALLEY BECAUSE HE IS WAITING PATIENTLY TO GO ON A WALK ON THE GOLF COURSE," ZARKOS SAID.

*Best* EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

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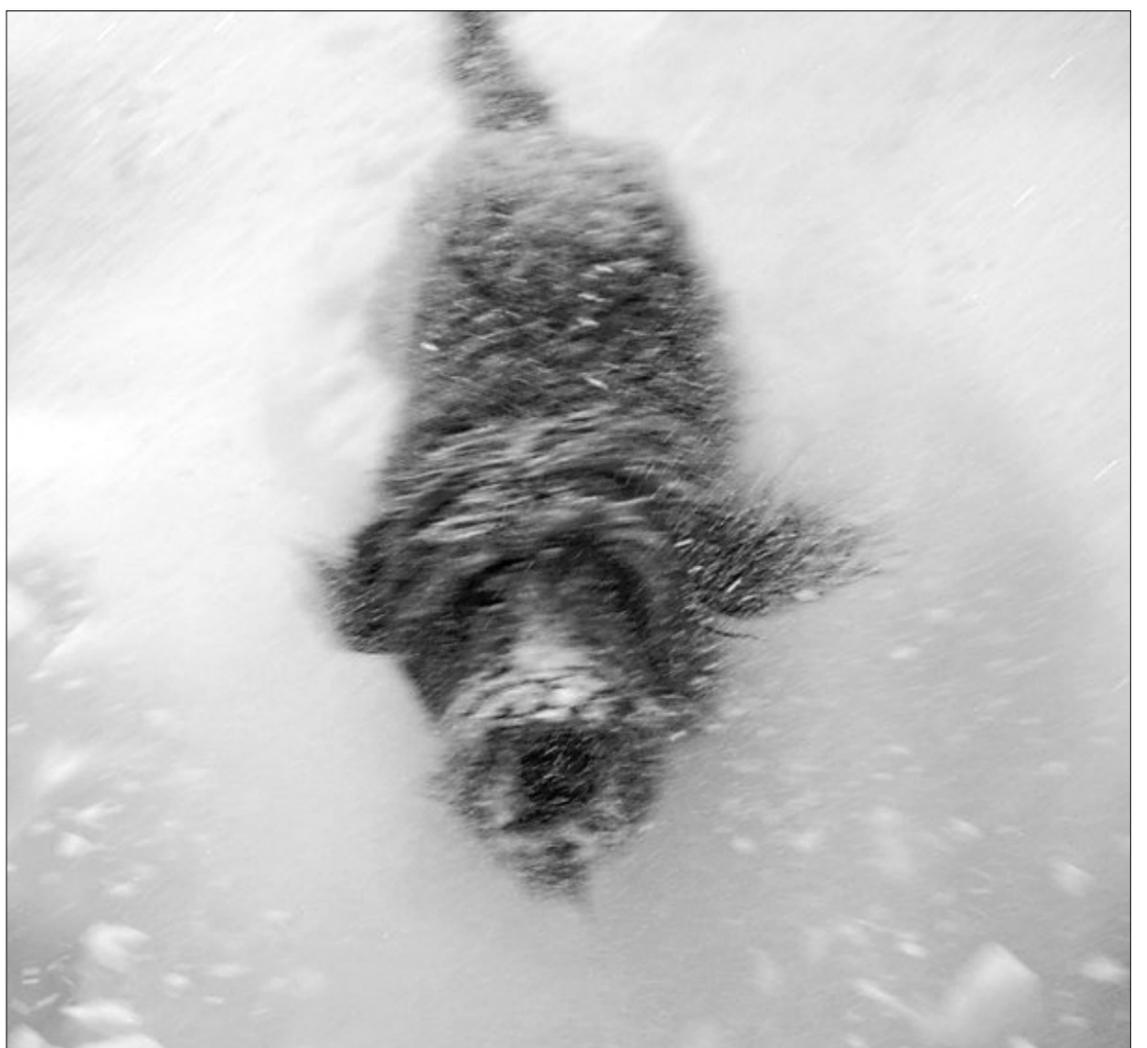
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“FUN!” LILY PLOWS THROUGH THE FIRST SNOW OF THE SEASON ON THE TRAIL CREEK GOLF COURSE. OWNER KEITH SAKS SAYS, “IF THIS ISN’T A SMILE ON HER FACE, NOTHING IS.”

*Best* IN SNOW



“GREAT CATCH!” GREG WILT GOT THIS ONE-IN-A-MILLION SHOT OF BOULDER CATCHING A SNOWBALL IN INDIAN CREEK.



Winner

BRIENNE MABRY ILLUSTRATES THE PURE JOY OF SIDNEY AND HEMINGWAY AS THEY FROLIC IN FRESHLY FALLEN SNOW AT SAGEBRUSH ARENA. “THIS PICTURE OF MY TWO GELDINGS ENJOYING THE FRESH AIR AND ROOM TO RUN PROVES MOVING TO IDAHO WAS THE BEST DECISION I COULD HAVE EVER MADE,” SHE SAID.



BURROWING THROUGH FRESH POWDER ON THE FOX CREEK TRAIL MAKES HAILEY A HAPPY DOG. PHOTO BY OWNER PEGGY BATES.

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CEDAR AND KODA TAKE IN THE SIGHTS OUT QUIGLEY CANYON. PHOTO BY OWNER MIKE SIERITIS.



PHOTOGRAPHER DIANA DUDLEY PERFECTLY CAPTURES THE SOULFUL EXPRESSION OF GROVER, OWNED BY MAGGIE ACKER.



JULY SOAKS UP THE SEPTEMBER SUNSHINE ON OWNER LEM SENTZ'S STANLEY PORCH. PHOTO BY TANYA CHAVEZ.

Winner



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