

## The Rescue

On Saturday, March 17, 2012, a friend and I took an antiquing trip. That afternoon, as we were driving in the middle of nowhere in a place I had never been before and will never go again, we saw two tiny figures in the middle of the highway. At first we thought they were squirrels but when we got closer, we had to stop because they stayed in the highway. We found two starving, filthy dirty, covered-in-fleas dogs (my friend had to put a flea bomb in her car to get rid of the fleas). We drove immediately to a store to buy food, and fed them. We believe they were looking for road kill to eat. The photo is of the dogs on the day after we picked them up. This we learned – when rescuing animals – immediately take pictures to document their condition.



My friend named them Loki and Hank. She is a cat person, I am the dog and horse person, so they went home with me. One of the dogs was wearing a collar with a tag. I was concerned that perhaps the dogs had been lost for a month to be in that condition. If so, I wanted to return them to their owner, but I did not want to return the dogs to an owner who kept them in that condition – that sort of owner should not be allowed to own animals.

On Monday, I took the dogs to my vet for treatment and to document their condition. In addition to being emaciated, both dogs had bloody diarrhea due to a serious infestation of hook worms (I saw the worms and was cleaning up their messes), one had an eye infection, the

other an ear infection, and one was heartworm positive. The veterinarian, Heidi Moore unfortunately, decided on her own (after I told her the dogs were not going back unless they had been gone a month) that the dogs should be returned to their owner. This was before she even examined them. When I arrived at close to 6:00 that day (their closing time), she had done nothing for the dogs. I was very unhappy – what kind of veterinarian would look at those sick dogs and want them to be returned to that owner? Heidi Moore did no fecal exam and no heartworm test. She just assumed or decided they would be returned. They did weigh Hank. He weighed ten pounds. He weighs 17 pounds now (2016) – that should indicate how malnourished he was. I took the dogs home, saying nothing. I wish so much I could go back to that point in time and change veterinarians. It would have saved my beloved horse, Harvey.

The owner was phoned and given my phone number. According to the vet, the owner stated they hadn't seen them in two days so they weren't even missed yet. No one was out looking for them while I had them for the third day. Time passed and I heard nothing. In fact, the owner lost my phone number and did not bother to call me for three weeks. At the three week point, I got a single phone message telling me he had lost my phone number and this "you got a coupla weenie dogs that belong to me?" That was the only attempt he made to get his dogs back. I was adamant these dogs were not going back to that situation. My friend had contacted an attorney who told us what to do. I never heard from the owner again.

I immediately started the dogs on Safe Guard, the over the counter canine medicine for hook worms. I already had four rescue dogs and they got hookworms from the doxies, so I had to treat all six dogs. It was quite expensive but my friend donated the funds for their treatment – bless her! The eye and ear infections cleared on their own once the dogs were eating again and free of worms.

I assumed they were both heartworm positive since they clearly had not been cared for. As he was feeling better, Loki began to dominate my old blind and deaf dog and fighting with Hank. It was time to rehome them. I rehomed Loki with the daughter of a friend – a family with another doxie and four children who adore him. Their vet tested and then treated Loki for heartworms, confirming my suspicion.

I had neighbors who are wonderful dog lovers and my hope was they would adopt Hank, but after thinking seriously about it for two weeks informed me they decided against it because three dogs were enough for them. At that point, I had cared for Hank for two months and I had grown attached to him. Moving him from the environment where he was slowly gaining confidence was not going to be what was best for him. Plus, I knew I would never find a home good enough for him because I already loved him. Hank's forever home was with me.



This veterinarian, Heidi Moore, who refused to step up to help these little dogs, developed a big attitude problem toward me afterward. On one occasion when I walked in to the clinic, she stuck out her tongue and rolled her eyes and head back (frightful rudeness) at another of the vets (Stephanie Mosley, who smiled back) and the receptionist there (no one else was there so it was definitely directed at me.) I wonder still if her horrible attitude caused her to believe I should lose my beloved Harvey. Maybe in her mind (twenty-something know-it-all?), I stole two dogs. She is so very wrong. If those two little dogs could talk, they would say the day they were rescued was the best day of their lives. Neither dog would have survived another month in the condition they were in. I had always been gracious to these veterinarians, so I can't understand that attitude. That day, I just took the poor dogs home and said nothing to her, but others have posted that she is really rude so maybe it wasn't just me. This was the only incident I recall where I had a problem with one of the veterinarians at Bastrop Veterinary Hospital - until they tortured and killed my beloved horse, Harvey. If your veterinarian is rude, please **immediately** find another veterinarian. I don't want what happened to me to happen to anybody else.

Hank blossomed into a confident, happy little dog. He developed what looked like an anal gland tumor (it was benign) and had successful surgery. In 2016, Hank had a second tumor and surgery but it also wasn't cancerous. Hank eats well and sleeps with me. He loves walks and laying under blankets, not on top. Hank hates snakes and will bark furiously at them, even if it's a snakeskin and not a live snake. He doesn't like cheese much, but he will eat it anyway to keep another dog from getting it. His favorite food is turkey bacon. He is the smallest of my five dogs and fearless – except of storms. In rainstorms, he snuggles next to me and trembles. Last

year was a huge year for acorn production and the oaks over the house dropped them almost continuously. It sounded like rain as they rolled down the metal roof, so Hank was trembling from the acorn rain. He's a lovely dog, but it's taken him a long time to become confident.

I think if God wanted to save a couple of starving, sick dogs, what better way to do it than plunk them down in front of two people He knew would stop and pick them up.

In September, 2016, I came home from work and found Hank dying. He died in my arms ten minutes after I arrived home, as if he had waited for me to say goodbye. I rushed him to my veterinarians, but there was nothing they could do. A necropsy at A&M revealed Hank had an adrenal gland tumor that had apparently been leaking a hormone into his system. He died of acute heart failure. Hank and I had four and a half years together that I knew he wouldn't have had if he had not been rescued.

I miss you, Hank-Hank, but I know you're with your best girl, Pepper.  
I hope there's lots of turkey bacon in Heaven.

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Judy Santerre