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## Raining cats & dogs

So many pets need good homes. Will you consider a loyal and loving addition to your family?

By [RICK CONRAD](#) Petpourri

WELCOME to what I hope will be a regular feature of Petpourri. With so many unwanted cats, dogs, birds, bunnies and even reptiles up for adoption through shelters and rescue networks in Nova Scotia, I thought it would be a good idea to feature some available animals once every four or five weeks. My original intention was to feature two or three a month. So much for that idea.

This week, we'll spotlight two cats, three dogs and five puppies. It's not so easy to edit yourself when it comes to these cute, cuddly critters.

At the risk of boring you more than a Stephen Harper acceptance speech, I want to stress that when you adopt a pet, you have to make sure you're ready for the lifelong responsibility and rewards of welcoming another member to your family. And do your research on the type of animal you're getting, whether it's a Maine coon or a Bull mastiff, a fighting fish or a leapin' lizard.

Also, don't forget that adopting animals and caring for them properly aren't cheap. According to Statistics Canada, the average household with a



*INGRID BULMER / Staff*

Two year-old Toni and her five pups are up for adoption at the SPCA in Dartmouth.



*ERIC WYNNE / Staff*

Scotty, a young black Lab mix, gives his best come hither look at Paws and Play.

domestic animal spends \$569 a year per pet.

Depending on the animal, that could be a lot more.

Anyway, enough lecturing. You want to get to the cute little cats and dogs.

## SCOTTY

So we'll begin with Scotty. He was rescued in Cape Breton by Celtic Pets in Port Hastings ([www.celticpets.com](http://www.celticpets.com)). But for the past couple of weeks, he's been hanging out with Kyra Foster who owns Paws and Play Daycare in Halifax and her dog Oliver.

Scotty is a black Labrador mix (heavy on the Lab), about 1 1/2 to two years old and is a little underweight. He's a bit skittish around strangers, but he's a huge sook. "He's a very, very sweet dog and very cuddly and very, very docile," Kyra says.

She says Scotty loves dogs and is curious about cats. In the two weeks he's been crashing at Kyra's place, he hasn't displayed any aggression toward her kitty and, in fact, seems to keep a respectable distance.

Kyra is offering free daycare for Scotty and his new owners, so that he won't be lonely through the day if his new parents are at work. And she's offering free overnight and weekend boarding if there are other dogs already being boarded. She also plans to have him neutered this week.

Anyone interested in Scotty



*PETER PARSONS / Staff*

Al looks out of a carpeted box at Bide-Awhile Animal Shelter in Dartmouth.



*PETER PARSONS / Staff*

Chelsea stands on a playbox at Bide Awhile Animal Shelter in Dartmouth.



*TIM KROCHAK / Staff*

Mewon in his foster parent's home on Wednesday. The cross-bred dog is up for adoption.

**Kibbles and bits**

should contact Zonda MacIsaac at Celtic Pets for more information. Her number is (902) 625-3938; her e-mail address is [jjzmacisaac@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:jjzmacisaac@ns.sympatico.ca).

#### AL & CHELSEA

Next are Al and Chelsea, two balls of love from Bide Awhile Animal Shelter in Dartmouth.

Al is a two-year-old white long-haired male. He's an indoor cat, loves people and is playful, says Darrold Gould, the shelter's executive director.

But he must go to a home where he's the only animal because he doesn't like the company of dogs or other cats.

A couple of cool local websites. One, [www.geocities.com/charlieloveshalifax/](http://www.geocities.com/charlieloveshalifax/) is devoted to making Halifax a more pooch-friendly city; [www.petyarns.com](http://www.petyarns.com) wants your pet stories and may publish them.

In last week's column, I included an e-mail address for the Nova Scotia Rottweiler Rescue. The address has changed, according to Laura, who left me a voice-mail about it. But the problem is, Laura forgot to leave her phone number or the new address. So Laura, please send the rescue's new address. I'll be sure to put it in next week's column. Thanks a lot.

Questions, comments or pet tales? Drop me a line at: [petpourricolumn@yahoo.ca](mailto:petpourricolumn@yahoo.ca)

Chelsea is a two-year-old white and tabby female cat. She also prefers to be the only animal in the house, but she's very affectionate with people and loves to be cuddled.

Al and Chelsea will be neutered and spayed. If you're interested, call (902) 469-9578, e-mail [bideawhile@eastlink.ca](mailto:bideawhile@eastlink.ca) or drop by for a visit at 12 Eaton Ave., Dartmouth. If Al or Chelsea isn't a good fit, Bide Awhile has dozens of other cats. The shelter is open Tuesday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

#### MEWON

Mewon (or Muey) is a freshly neutered (ouch!) German shepherd/Labrador mix who's been spending time with his foster Mom in Lake Echo. There may be other breeds in there too, perhaps even Akita, according to Annette at the Animal Rescue Coalition ([www.animalrescue-coalitions.com](http://www.animalrescue-coalitions.com)).

This two-year-old melting pot is sweet-tempered and intelligent. He's well-behaved with other dogs, excellent with people and generally easy-going, Annette says. He's ready and raring to go to a "forever home."

When Muey was rescued, a wire from his lead was stuck in his neck. You can still see the scar, but it's healed well, she says. He weighs about 30 kilograms and has a shaggy coat and a big, lolly-tongued smile.

If you'd like to meet Muey, contact Ruby Daley at [dstarrs@hfx.eastlink.ca](mailto:dstarrs@hfx.eastlink.ca) or (902) 823-1710 or Annette Sanford at [annette@animalrescuecoalitions.com](mailto:annette@animalrescuecoalitions.com) or (902) 823-2167 and they'll set up a time. Or you can always visit their

website for more contact information.

## TONI & PUPS

Last, but certainly not least adorable, are Toni and her five puppies. This Lab mix roamed the streets of the Halifax region for months without food or a home, according to Judith Gass, president of the Nova Scotia SPCA ([www.spcans.ca](http://www.spcans.ca)).

A resident heard puppies crying under the floor of his shed. Investigators found five little ones, barely weeks old. After being seen by a vet, they were sent to the Metro SPCA where volunteers have been trying to make them as comfy as possible, Judith says. Toni was thin and timid when she arrived at the shelter, largely due to being a stray dog for so long trying to take care of her babies alone, she says. "With patience and a lot of love, (Toni) has been blossoming into quite a charmer and she is loving all the attention," Judith writes in an e-mail. The five-week-old puppies are happy and healthy.

Anyone interested in adopting Toni or her pups can call the SPCA at (902) 468-7877, e-mail [metrospca@ns.aliantzinc.ca](mailto:metrospca@ns.aliantzinc.ca) or drop by the shelter at 5 Scarfe Crt. in Burnside Tuesday to Saturday or Sunday.

The shelter will accept applications for the puppies until they are weaned and properly socialized with their siblings and Mom. All pups adopted from the Metro SPCA must be enrolled in an obedience program of the owner's choice.

## PET ADOPTION

Now a word about the adoption process. Each place is a little different, but most places will charge you a fee because the animals are usually spayed or neutered, dewormed, vaccinated or have had other veterinary attention.

Most reputable outfits will ask for and check references. There may even be a cooling-off period between the time you're accepted and when you actually pick up the pet, to make sure you're ready to adopt.

Shelter workers' primary concern is to send these animals to a home where they'll be well-cared for and become a part of the family for the rest of their lives - a "forever" home.

Rick Conrad is The Chronicle Herald's education reporter.

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