

ANIMAL SAVIORS

Barney

Sometimes it seems there is a fairy tale under every dog bed in the canyon. Take Barney; he's new to the Land of Hollywood and a bit of a frog prince with a Cinderella story behind him. He doesn't look like your average prince... no long, pinched face; his ears are small and he doesn't party, chase women, or sing. He may not look like royalty either, with hints of a rough and tumble past visible in a pattern of small nicks that scar his scalp. There is some speculation that these are the result of having escaped

circumstances of his birth are unknown. By the look of him we can guess that he's probably a White Boxer and American Bulldog mix but the secrets of his past are locked inside that scarred, velvety white head.

We know that Barney was at one point a street

territory, performed the ritualistic sniff test and promptly watered the bushes in what could only be described as old-fashioned teamwork. Viewed as a good omen, Barney was then invited to come home for a 2-day trial. Though Barney was perfectly

well. The 2-day trial stretched into 2 weeks. Jake was reluctant at first to share his backyard with a stranger but there are skunks and squirrels aplenty in that garden and he could hardly deny access to his new wrestling partner. Jake loves his toys so that was a potential area of conflict but Barney has no interest there. It is likely that growing up on the street doesn't teach a dog to appreciate toys.

Mike and Tina fell in love with Barney and Jake is so fond of his friend that he licks the drool right off his chops to keep him neat and tidy. It appears they are inseparable. As soon as Barney's adoption was complete, his only fault surfaced... he snores louder than a chainsaw and cannot be allowed to nap in the room while the

family watches TV. Fortunately, Barney and Jake share a couch in the living room at night and Jake doesn't seem to mind the roar of his buddy's challenged sinuses. Sleep tight, sweet princes!

—Lori Hughes is a Beachwood resident and professional dog walker in our canyon as well as a new Beachwood Canyon Neighborhood Association board member. She can be found at LJHughes@juno.com.



Top: Barney is a white Boxer/Bulldog mix. Bottom: Barney and his step-brother, Jake (a full-bred boxer) really love each other!

from a wire enclosure or from having been a hapless plaything for fighting dogs as a puppy. These cannot detract from his classic bulldog features... the soft folds of pink flesh drooping from a saggy jaw line and bags of pink skin around his bright eyes. He's nearly all white with just a touch of brown on the ears and he's such a drool factory. He could be dubbed the Prince of Slobber. That doesn't stop his new owners, Tina and Mike McFaul, from loving their super-salivating pal, and their Boxer, Jake, couldn't be happier with his new playmate. The beginning of this fairy tale, however, is a bit of a mystery as the

dog because he did some time in the San Bernardino dog pound. From there he was rescued by Kari Whitman's Ace of Hearts Foundation. Barney was initially adopted by someone else and though it was, by all accounts, a very loving home with another bulldog and a dachshund for company, his owner died and Barney was returned to Ace.

Barney's new pal, Jake, is a head-turning purebred

Boxer with all the energy you would expect in a 2 year old. He's a wonderful dog but Tina and Mike thought he needed a fulltime playmate to burn off a little steam and help him make a graceful transition into a respectable, mature dog. Tina did some online investigating and found Barney. A short walk introduced Jake to his prospective new brother. They met in neutral

healthy and Ace had already taken care of any medical concerns, Mike and Tina took the dog to their own vet to "kick the tires" one more time. The dog was fine but the vet was convinced that 2 males, even neutered males, in one household would be a bad combination. While this professional opinion was given serious consideration, the dogs seemed to get along very

I recently saw a young man wearing a t-shirt that read, "Time is an invention!" I nodded on the inside having learned from a little dog just how true were those words.

When I first laid eyes on Rambo, I thought he was a little rug on the floor in the corner. His 7-pound body had found a cozy place in my friend's home. His owner had been placed in an assisted living facility and they didn't allow pets. So here he was making the best out of a transition that was sad but inevitable.

His new home wasn't working out well for my friends since they had no special place for Rambo. You see, Rambo was a special needs dog. His advanced age (19 at that time) brought with it many signs of diminished capacity like blindness and deafness. So Rambo would fall down stairs or bump into furniture, not knowing the lay of the land.

I offered to get Rambo groomed, which began a long love affair.

This was my first small dog and I was determined to give him the best few months possible. I made an enclosure for him right in the middle of our living room. Both my husband and I live extremely busy lives and rarely spend time in that area of our home.

I'm not much of a cook but Rambo's delicate palate required broiling marinated

RAMBO: a Love Affair



chicken thighs. He had dental issues so his food needed to be cut up very finely. Somehow the time existed for these tasks.

His favorite activity (besides eating) was walking in the backyard. Almost totally blind, he learned every tree and rock in that yard and would walk in large circles for long periods of time sniffing everything. I was thrilled to see him enjoying this space. I imagined that this was a little dog's version of being put out to pasture.

At night he would sit on my lap to get his massages while we watched Keith Olberman. Rambo liked ritual.

Amazingly the anticipated "few months" stretched into a couple of years with the only change in routine being the need to feed Rambo baby food in an oral syringe every 4 hours or so. His teeth were mostly gone and he was now totally blind. His back had developed a distinct curvature and he walked with bowed legs just like the little old man that he had become. Rambo had mellowed out and become part of my daily life—a loving exchange that made our bond very strong.

A couple of years ago, I wondered where I would find the time to devote to such a small needy dog. Holding his now weak and frail body, pacing back and forth in the veterinarian's office waiting for the doctor to give Rambo his last injection, we had a little talk. He promised to run around in my back yard once he was free of this painful body that had long since ceased to serve him. And then he thanked me. I know he did because my first instinctive words out loud to him were, "You're very welcome." Where did the time go? Oh, that's right—Rambo and I invented it just in time to be together.

—Fran Reichenbach

"A dog is like an eternal Peter Pan, a child who never grows old and who therefore is always available to love and be loved."—Aaron Katcher, American Educator and Psychiatrist