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Miss Ellie May gets her man!



**Don't
wake me**

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**Recent
arrivals**

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**One year
later**

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Steve and Alayne with Daisy, who has disk problems in her back. The resulting neurological condition makes her incontinent, so we're always careful when we hold her!

A new start in life

It always feels a bit odd to be working on our spring newsletter when there's still more than a foot of snow outside, but the warmer temperatures, longer days, and a few intrepid and chirpy songbirds tell us that spring really is on the way!

In this issue you'll read about Ellie May, a blind-and-deaf Cocker Spaniel who came to us after her owner died. We've heard from some people who wonder about the quality of life that a blind-and-deaf animal can have. But as you'll see, Ellie May loves *every minute* of her new life at the ranch. And that is true of all of our blind-and-deaf animals. Like the rest of the disabled gang, they don't let their disabilities keep them from enjoying life.

Ellie May and her friends get this opportunity for a new start in life because of *your* generous donations. On behalf of all of them, thank you for your compassion and kindness!

Alayne Marker and Steve Smith, Co-founders

P.S. You can keep up with the daily happenings at the ranch by checking out www.blog.rollingdogranch.org, our 5-day a week blog!

Make a gift for the animals

There are many ways you can help the animals:

- Make a **cash donation**. You can mail a check, make a secure online donation at our Web site, or call us to process a credit card donation over the phone.
- Donate **stock** (we can work with your broker on the details).
- Make a **bequest** to the sanctuary in your will. See our planned giving page for more information at www.rollingdogranch.org/support/planned_giving.html.
- Post our **flyer** in your workplace, vet clinic, and pet store (you can download the flyer from our Web site, or we can mail it to you).
- Ask us to send you **extra newsletters** for your family and friends, and for your vet clinic, too.

The sanctuary is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization and runs 100% on donations. Contributions are tax-deductible. We appreciate your help!

Tyler's version of 'Bed, Bath and Beyond'

Our deaf English Pointer Tyler has always done things his own way – whether it's sleeping on shelves, pointing at bugs on walls, or sleeping in custom-made gravel holes. If it's just a little different, you can be sure he's done it ... or soon will.

Thus it came as no particular surprise when we discovered him sleeping in the portable doggie bathtub at Widget's House, our main dog building. This tub has hoses curled up inside it, so it's not exactly a comfy spot to snooze, but it is different and that apparently was the appeal.

Alayne got this shot of Tyler being rudely woken up when she walked into Widget's House one night, found him in the tub and started taking photos. Hence the look on Tyler's face. And it's not like he's embarrassed to be seen sleeping in a bathtub – only annoyed at having his slumber interrupted by a camera flash.

We're just waiting to come in one day and find him asleep on the fridge.



2007 annual report now online

We've posted our 2007 annual report online, and you can find it on our main Web site home page. The report shows what we accomplished last year, including how many animals came to the ranch and other highlights. It also contains the summary financial information, showing how we spent our donors' gifts. It's those generous gifts that make everything we do here at the ranch possible – thank you!



Miss Ellie May gets her man!

An elderly woman in Montana died without leaving instructions on what to do with her blind-and-deaf Cocker Spaniel, Ellie May. The person handling the estate, Robin M., realized that given Ellie May's age – at least 10 – and disabilities, she wasn't a candidate for a shelter. A vet recommended Robin euthanize Ellie May.



When Robin called us, she said, "This little dog is still full of life, how could I do such a thing?" So Robin drove Ellie May out to the ranch. We were shocked when we saw her eyes. They bulged and were red and inflamed – clearly painful. She needed medical care right away.



Our vet in Helena, Dr. Brenda Culver, examined Ellie May and found she suffered from *three* eye disorders – uveitis, cataracts, and glaucoma. We couldn't save her eyes, and the only way to eliminate her pain was to

remove them. This senior girl came through surgery just fine and she left the hospital pain-free for the first time in years.

We like to joke that Alayne has an entire squad of "minions" – all the Dachshunds and other "short-legs" who worship her and follow her everywhere. Well, Steve never had a real minion until Ellie May showed up ... and from Day One, she's never left his side.

Even though she can't hear or see a thing, Ellie May uses her phenomenal nose to keep an "eye" on Steve. Whenever he's working at his desk, she's sleeping on the bed next to his chair. If he leaves the office, Ellie May follows along. While he's cooking dinner, she sits by the stove. And at mealtime, Ellie May parks herself next to Steve at the dining table.

She doesn't have separation anxiety or get upset when Steve's not around. She'll look for him, and if she finally realizes he's not in the house, she heads into his office and waits until he returns.

When he does return, *oh, what a celebration!* She lets out little barks of joy and then throws herself over on her back, rolling and rolling with sheer delight.

Steve's waited a long time for a minion of his own, and it took Ellie May a long time to find her man, but now the two of them couldn't be happier!



Recent arrivals

Herbie the blind cat



One of our blog readers suggested naming this blind cat "Herbie" after we described him as a "lovebug" in a blog post. Herbie came from a shelter in Helena, Montana, where the staff adored him for his constant affection and purring. When they couldn't find a home for this sweet boy, they called us. But before he came to the ranch, Herbie had to make a "pit stop" at our vet clinic, where they removed a painful glaucoma eye. His remaining right eye is shrunken and sits back in the socket, but doesn't cause him any discomfort. Now Herbie cruises around the cat house, playing with the other cats and going on adventures. When we pick him up, he'll rev his engine up to full-throttle. This lovebug is 100% powered by a purring motor!

Smokey and Charlie the wobbly brothers

Just in case anyone thought there couldn't be any more wobbliness here than there already is, may we introduce ... Smokey and Charlie!

These two young pups – Charlie is the tan one, Smokey is the dark one – arrived from an Ohio shelter. They are little things – each is about 20 pounds, with small frames and long necks. We think they might be Whippet mixes. They have cerebellar hypoplasia, a neurological condition that makes them wobble. Add into the mix the natural exuberance of puppies, and it's true wobble mania with these two. Because they are less coordinated than our other wobblers, we recently had them fitted for wheelchairs. As soon as the snow melts, these boys will really be able to cruise!



Bo the blind Appaloosa



Bo was abandoned at a boarding stable in Oregon when his owners decided they didn't want him after he went blind. A teenage girl named Rachel started caring for this big, handsome fellow. After the stable owners said they were going to send Bo to a wildlife park for lion food, Rachel began contacting horse rescues in Oregon for help. One of those rescues called us, and we worked together to get Bo to safety and then out to Montana. We've discovered that Bo also has a neurological condition that he's currently receiving medical attention for. But thanks to a young lady who stepped in to save him, Bo is getting another chance to enjoy life.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Visit our Web sites at RollingDogRanch.org and BlindHorses.org



In our spring newsletter a year ago, we ran a series of photos of blind Goldie opening boxes of toys. Well, here she is again, still at it in 2008. (Her back is shaved from recent surgery.) We thought about calling this photo "Thinking *inside* the box."

About the sanctuary

The Rolling Dog Ranch Animal Sanctuary is home to many types of disabled animals. Our residents include blind dogs, blind horses, deaf dogs, blind cats, and animals with other kinds of disabilities.

Although these animals may have disabilities, they do not consider themselves handicapped. They just want to get on with life and enjoy themselves. Thanks to the support of the sanctuary's friends, that's what they get to do here.

Yet these are the animals who are the least likely to be adopted and among the most likely to be euthanized in traditional shelters. That's why we focus on the disabled.

Steve Smith and Alayne Marker founded the sanctuary in 2000 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization known as a private operating foundation. Donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

The ranch covers 160 acres of grassland in the Blackfoot River valley of western Montana. The sanctuary cares for more than 80 animals, and is supported 100% by donations. Thank you for your kindness!

What a difference a year makes!

In March of 2007, a 4-week old blind foal named Cash arrived at the ranch from Alabama. In the photo at top, you see what he looked like on his first day here – a tiny little thing who was as cute as can be.



And this is what he looks like, one year later. He's now officially a big, sort-of-grown-up yearling ... not a foal any longer. Today he's Mr. Full-of-Himself, a self-confident, brash fellow who likes to torment his older "sisters," blind Nikki and blind Destiny, by playing the bratty little brother.



Visits to the ranch

The sanctuary is open for visits from **June through September on the 1st and 3rd weekends** of the month. All visits are by appointment only. Please call in advance to schedule a visit and get directions. The sanctuary is closed for visits from October through May and also on major holidays.