

## In Loving Memory of Hilleary's Dixie River Blues



**April 1, 1997 - January 27, 2007**

We are so very grieved to report that we lost our dear, beloved River today. She was out hunting with Brian this afternoon, playing on the shoreline, when she collapsed suddenly. Her behavior to that point was her usual, happy, wagging, excited-to-be-out-in-the-world-with-her-person self. We already miss her so very much.

For Brian and I, she was our first "baby", having picked her up as an 8-week old puppy weeks before our first wedding anniversary. She filled so many roles for us through these years: our loyal companion, friend, inspiration, muse, business partner, playmate, model, rescue hero, strange noise investigator, foot-warmer, snack-thief, bandana-wearer, exercise pal, fur-soft-as-silk pillow, tear-licker, storytime buddy, baby-food cleaner-upper, squirrel-chaser, and doorbell.

She was an expert at playing fetch and frisbee, and loved going duck-hunting with Brian more than anything else. Today was the last day of this hunting season, and I know there's no where else she would have rather spent her final time on Earth than with him, doing what they loved.

In remembering her this evening, we remarked how she impacted the world in her nearly 10 years here than many humans manage to do. Our instant affection for her and her breed caused Brian and I to team up with other Boykin Spaniel owners and help organize Boykin Spaniel Rescue. In taking her out and about to events in our region, we generated interest in the breed in a part of the country where no one had ever heard of them before. She single-pawedly helped find homes for more than 25 homeless dogs in the Virginia/DC/Maryland region. Through her desire for a yard and our initial small townhome space, we were encouraged to become active in the Reston Dog Park Coalition, where we lobbied lawmakers and helped to bring a dog park to our beautiful town. She was a beautiful dog, and never did go grey in the muzzle during these nearly 10 years. No wonder she once graced a greeting card and a few calendars with her good looks. We treated her like the Princess she was, giving her run of the house. She rarely abused her good fortune. We named a company after her, we bought her a truck - a 4-Runner, in the same brown color as her coat with vanity plates announcing her presence, and bought a house with the biggest fenced-in yard we could afford so she could have a dog park all her own.

Need we mention she was excellent with people? More than one parent of a previously dog-frightened child remarked how gently she'd take a treat from a child's hand, or how well she listened to commands from the smallest tot. We often said to Connor and Cameron how River was not their dog, but they were her boys. How she loved hanging out under the table during mealtimes, or racing Connor up the stairs (she always won!) and waiting in the upstairs hall during bathtime. She'd do her rounds each evening, stopping in Cameron's room for a goodnight while he nursed, and ending up on Connor's bed for story time. She'd stay there, snoozing at his feet, until long after he was asleep when she'd come downstairs to be let out one last time before settling in at the foot of our bed for the duration of the night. She greeted everyone with exuberance (sometimes too much.) and we often remarked that one day she'd get old and settle down and stop jumping on people in greeting. She was the eternal puppy, to the end. She was much loved by us, and loved us so much in return. Thank you, River.

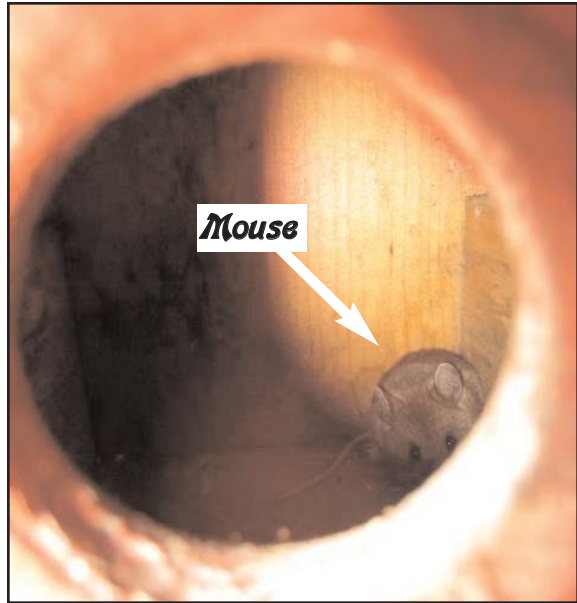
Tomorrow she'll be laid to rest at Waltham Farm, at the Bend in the Lane, where she demonstrated the peculiar habit of leaping out of the car and racing around that very bend up the lane, barking for joy, whenever we'd arrive for a visit. We said from her earliest days there that when she finally passed on, we'd bury her in that spot where she made her inexplicable barking turn during that excited arrival run.

I once read that Adam named this creature, "Dog", the inverse of "God" because whenever he looked, man would see the reflection of God's love for him in a dog's unconditional gaze. We never doubted how unconditional her love was for each of us, and so many who had the pleasure to share her company these past years. Connor summed up our feelings best tonight before bed when he said, "There's a big hole in my heart where River used to be." Indeed, there is.

With regret,

Tanya, Brian, Connor & Cameron





**Boykins hunting for a mouse on the farm of Chris Weihs...**  
Photo submitted by Greg Copeland



**DOG DIARY**

- 8:00 am - Dog food! My favorite thing!
- 9:30 am - A car ride! My favorite thing!
- 9:40 am - A walk in the park! My favorite thing!
- 10:30 am - Got rubbed and petted! My favorite thing!
- 12:00 PM - Lunch! My favorite thing!
- 1:00 PM - Played in the yard! My favorite thing!
- 3:00 PM - Wagged my tail! My favorite thing!
- 5:00 PM - Milk bones! My favorite thing!
- 7:00 PM - Got to play ball! My favorite thing!
- 8:00 PM - Wow! Watched TV with the people! My favorite thing!
- 11:00 PM - Sleeping on the bed! My favorite thing!

**CAT DIARY** Day 983 of my captivity. My captors continue to taunt me with bizarre little dangling objects. They dine lavishly on fresh meat, while the other inmates and I are fed hash or some sort of dry nuggets. Although I make my contempt for the rations perfectly clear, I nevertheless must eat something in order To keep up my strength. The only thing that keeps me going is my dream of escape. In an attempt to disgust them, I once again vomit on the carpet. Today I decapitated a mouse and dropped its headless body at their feet. I had hoped this would strike fear into their hearts, since it clearly demonstrates what I am capable of. However, they merely made condescending comments about what a "good little hunter" I am. Jerks! There was some sort of assembly of their accomplices tonight. I was placed in solitary confinement for the duration of the event. However, I could hear the noises and smell the food. I overheard that my confinement was due to the power of "allergies." I must learn what this means, and how to use it to my advantage. Today I was almost successful in an attempt to assassinate one of my tormentors by weaving around his feet as he was walking. I must try this again tomorrow -- but at the top of the stairs. I am convinced that the other prisoners here are flunkies and snitches. The dog receives special privileges. He is regularly released - and seems to be more than willing to return. He is obviously retarded. The bird has got to be an informant. I observe him communicate with the Guards regularly. I am certain that he reports my every move. My captors have arranged protective custody for him in an elevated cell, so he is safe. 🐾

