



Puppies at Large

Irony. Door closes and a window opens. Things happen for a reason. Supernatural powers beyond our control . . . the clichés of life. Last year, about this time, one hit me. Most of us, at some point, have had a puppy or a dog that has been a big part of life. Being Superintendents, we have had or worked on a course that had some kind of dog that ran around either chasing geese or golfers, but mostly being a companion throughout our long days.



Lexie and her pups on their birthday.

My companion for 16 years was a German shepherd mix. She loved to chase geese, was always friendly to the golfers, and was continually in my shadow. She never left the utility vehicle when I was in the clubhouse even for long periods of time. She was a difficult dog to replace (a big part of my life) and after she was put to sleep, it took me 15 months to start thinking about getting another dog. Finally, I purchased another German shepherd mix – Lexie. She was roughly about 11 months old, she seemed friendly, had a great color scheme, and devoted. But, she would chase anything that moved. I had her about two weeks when she took off after a deer along Salt Creek. By chance, the Bloomingdale Police found her that afternoon west of Interstate 355 along Lake Street near Medinah Country Club. At the time, I started to think I wasn't going to keep her anymore. However, I noticed she was gaining weight and her stomach was starting to bulge.

One month after getting Lexie, on April 24th, she delivered seven puppies in my front room. My girlfriend Mary and I helped deliver each puppy. It was fun and exciting, the whole process took about two hours. Mary and I didn't know who was the sire and figured she got pregnant in the kennel. After seeing the pups, a veterinarian took a guess – some bull mastiff was the father. I started everyday with a new routine. I would put each puppy in a shoebox and head for work with all eight animals in my truck. I fixed up an area in my office where Lexie and her seven puppies would live until they started to learn how to scoot across the floor. Last Mother's Day, I took the two-week-old pups to Kankakee to visit my parents and my 93-year old Grandmother. The puppies were a hit; it had been a long time since my Grandmother smiled all day.

(continued on page 4)



Puppies at Large (continued from page 3)

Thankfully, I had some help raising the puppies; Mary's three daughters helped me to bathe, feed, and puppy-sit. I thought we did great, we only had to make two emergency visits to the vet. When the puppies became three weeks old, I traded the shoebox for a dog carrier to take them to work every day. During the fourth week, we fed them dog food, taught them to drink from a water dish and spent several afternoons in the back yard – they had to poop and pee. The next three weeks, we watched all the puppies grow, knowing that they would be leaving soon. Over the several weeks, all but

one, found homes. This last, I kept and named him – Hoss. Hoss wasn't breathing when he was born – I had to revive him and guess I got attached to him. He now weighs close to 125 pounds and is still growing. Since then, I have had Hoss and Lexie both fixed and together they have become my new shadow. This spring has reminded me how those seven puppies brought me so much joy over those few weeks last year. So enjoy life, embrace the loved ones, and adjust to whatever is thrown at you along they way.



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