



India knew when help was needed . . . more than once.

India – More Than A Sighthound

Pamela D. Korte

Since 1993, I have owned four Greyhounds and a Whippet. Each of them has amazed me in unique ways. India's instincts have proven to be especially valuable.

On a cold and early morning in late January 2009, India woke me up about 3 a.m. I awoke to her incessant whining and I assumed she had to go out. But India did not seem to think I was getting up fast enough. She first pulled the pillow from under my head and then pulled all the covers off the bed, and then she yanked on the sleeve of my pajamas. My other Greyhound, Cassie, watched her antics and tried to go back to sleep.

I finally got up and put on my bathrobe. The house was very cold. As I walked India to the door to let her outside I noticed that the thermostat read 53 degrees. When I opened the door, she looked at me and sat there, refusing to go outside. I was annoyed that she got me out of bed and then did not want to go out.

India started running back and forth between me and the cellar door. I thought she might be hungry as the dogs' food bin is stored near the cellar door. I informed India that it was not time to eat. She became anxious and started

barking at me and the cellar door, so I opened the door. India took two jumps down the entire flight of stairs.

When I got to the bottom of the stairs she ran back and forth between the furnace and me. As I got close to the gas furnace I smelled a strong burning rubber-like odor and heard a clicking sound. I called the furnace company's 24-hour line and was told to turn off the fan to the furnace.

The emergency technician arrived within two hours. He pulled the furnace apart to discover that the computer board was fused together and that nearby wires had burned. I was informed by the technician if I had not turned off the electrical components to the furnace, it would have caught on fire within a few minutes and probably burned the house down or caused an explosion. India's nose, not her sight, saved my life and my home. The next day a new high-efficiency furnace was installed. India and Cassie supervised the installation process, of course.

At one point, they asked to go outside; the weather was only 5 degrees. India returned almost immediately, but Cassie did not return and I couldn't see her outside the back window.

The dogs have the luxury of being able to run on five acres of fenced property, and they regularly played a game of hide and seek. Cassie loved to hide and India would go find her. I assumed that they were playing this game despite the frigid conditions outside. I told India to go find Cassie for me. She tried and returned without Cassie which was very unusual. But once again India showed her unique presence of mind. She started her incessant barking and yanking on my sleeve. I put a coat on and went to see what she was barking about outside.

She kept running back and forth behind one of over fifty evergreens in the back yard. I ran after her and discovered Cassie lying in the snow and unable to get up. I got Cassie up on her feet but she would not bear any weight on her right front leg. I carried her into the house where India kept licking her shoulder. Cassie was able to walk on three legs without any crying or whining. Cassie immediately settled down and went to sleep. After a short rest she got up and walked normally. I decided to make an appointment for

the next morning to see the veterinarian. During the night India stayed very close to Cassie and kept licking her shoulder.

The next morning both dogs went to the veterinarian to see what was wrong with the leg. X-rays were taken after an examination revealed a lot of discomfort in the shoulder. The veterinarian put the X-ray on the screen and immediately I recognized that Cassie had osteosarcoma in the shoulder. Cassie lived a very short and courageous life with cancer after the diagnosis. She made her way to the Rainbow Bridge at the end of February 2009. India's crucial persistence resulted in Cassie getting the veterinary care she needed.

India participates in her therapy work as a reading education assistance dog and is helping train a rescued Whippet who will become a therapy dog.

Rescued as a puppy that no one wanted, India has returned thanks many times over. She came to a home where she has made a difference in many lives — possibly saving mine. ■

Pamela D. Korte, RN MS is a Professor of Nursing at Monroe Community College in Rochester, N.Y. She shares her home with India and Gina, the Whippet.



Puck (Get In My Belly), adopted by Jeff and Shelley Lake of Paola, Kan.