

To: Friends of Old Apples
From: Tom Brown

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Apple Search---2008

This year was an odd one for an apple searcher in that there were very few apples due to the freeze. In past years I have listed apples "found" which involved my seeing the actual tree and almost always also seeing the actual apple. This year I am just going to tell you about apples that I have really good leads on and I should be able to confirm if there are apples next year. They are as follows: Annet, Apple Butter, August Start, Banana Greenskin, Bean, Benjamin, Bill, Cole, Cook Red, Cordley, Cracky Back, Democrat (red/green), Democrat (red/yellow), Dillard, Early June (green), Early June (white/striped), Early Summer, Gibson, Greer, Grammy, Greasy Sweets, Green Sheepnose, Horton, John Tommy, Leather Jacket, Leatherman, Maggard, Missouri Pippin, Mullins-Ferguson, Musk Melon, One Sided, Pink Stripe, Pound (red), Red May, Red Pearmain, Rose Limbertwig, Sandow, Sheepnose (striped), Shock, Short Core, Sour Golden, Summer Bellflower, Tackett, Thinskin Flat, Thorn, Tucker's Ever Bearing, Vine, Wayte Stanley, Winter Vandevere, White Pearmain, World's Wonder, & Yellow Rome.

One feature of 2007 was Barry Bonds effort to break Hank Aaron's home run record of 755. I was also in the chase, wanting to find 756 apples before Barry Bonds broke the record. I thought that I was 20 short of 756, but I took a careful inventory of the apples found and realized that I had already broken the record; and now I am up to about 800.

The year 2007 was one of intensive political campaigning. I guess that it is fitting that this year I found the Democrat apple in Yancey County, NC. There is also a Republican Pippin, but I have not found it yet. In Ashe County, NC someone remembered a "Publican" apple, could this be the Republican?

I was an exhibitor in the Kentucky Apple Festival in Paintsville, KY. There was an interesting apple in that area with a host of name variations. It was called August Start, August Tart, August Starts, Augur Starch, August Star, and August Starch. The true name is probably August Start, which was most frequently mentioned. It is a large apple, yellow with a slight amount of red, almost sweet, ripe early fall, and has many uses.

I would like to tell you about my buddies who I sadly leave behind when I go on apple trips; my six dogs and to share some of the wonderful times that we have together.

As youngsters my Brother and I had a dog, a Border Collie mix named Butter Ball. Then almost forty years passed with only cats in my life. I was just two months from retirement and was wondering what I would do with all my coming extra time. I came home on a very dark evening. My wife, Merrikay, was home but the front porch light was not on as usual. As I neared the door a large animal growled at me from the darkened end of the porch. I was so frightened that I could not get the key in the lock and my wife had to open the door. A little later after I had calmed down, I went back out and saw that the animal was a large mostly black dog who was growling because she was afraid of me. We did not know who the dog belonged to so we both said, "She will probably just go away." When I came home the next day the dog was on the porch; I promptly went out and bought some dog food and then I had a companion in retirement.

My wife named her Keiko. She was a large mixed breed dog, with some Lab in her. Keiko was very shy and about three months passed before I could pat her. Eventually she

loved tummy rubs and all types of affection. Keiko was a charmer with large soulful eyes. She delighted in rides with me; her head out of the window feeling the rush of air.

Keiko enjoyed ice cream. I would buy a vanilla cone and then I would hold it for her to eat. Slowly the ice cream would disappear as Keiko took serious, deliberate licks with her very large tongue. Eventually everything would be gone above the top of the cone. Then she would continue to lick deeply within the cone until no more ice cream could possibly be reached; only then she would eat the cone.

Keiko and I had a great game that we played together called Mr. Elephant. It involved a flattened stuffed elephant, which would squeak if its tummy was squeezed. I would throw Mr. Elephant as far as I could and then we would both run as fast as possible to try to get to the elephant first. Of course Keiko always arrived first and picked up Mr. Elephant. I would then try to grab the elephant in an attempt to get it away from her. Keiko was so quick, that I could never grasp the elephant. My missing would continue for about two minutes; then she would deliberately be slightly slower and I would grab Mr. Elephant. After a few pulls Keiko would release the elephant. Then I would throw it again, starting another round in the game. We did this over and over.

We have ten acres and I fenced half of it creating a five-acre dog lot; I put in every post and all the wire by myself, which took many months.

We had returned on a Sunday from a week-long trip to New Mexico and found a desperate call on our answering machine. A large stray dog had showed up at our neighbors, Deane. It was a wonderful dog and she could not keep him because she already had four dogs. The next day a neighbor was going to call Animal Control to have the dog picked up. We returned her call and she asked us if we could give the dog a temporary home. We agreed. We named the dog Chaco for the famous Indian ruin we had just seen in New Mexico; he was a German Shepherd/Rottweiler mix. At first both Keiko and Chaco growled at each other when being fed. After three days they were in love. Chaco is a very gentle giant and always treated Keiko as the "queen doggie". Keiko and Chaco were the perfect doggie companions always being very affectionate; Keiko greatly appreciated all the attention and happily blossomed with Chaco at her side.

Then came an incredibly sad day two years later; Keiko died suddenly due to an enlarged heart. I do not readily show emotion, but I cried for days. This dearly beloved friend deserved to be honored. We had a funeral for Keiko and invited twelve friends. We had happy banners celebrating Keiko's life and everyone brought a covered dish to share. At the service we read seventeen stories Merrikay and I wrote about Keiko. She was buried with a Mr. Elephant and her favorite food bowl that she was always carrying.

It was depressingly quiet without Keiko. After a couple of weeks we started looking for a friend for Chaco. We finally decided on a Black Lab we named Pepper. No dog could replace Keiko, but Pepper is a good dog. She has interesting little quirks that I call Lab-A-Phobia. She has difficulty getting past the seven foot blank wall to turn into the living room with its hardwood floors. Other than the hallway, she confines herself to area rugs; if she tries to retrieve a ball she must always keep one foot safely on the rug.

This story starts on a very hot 95 degree August day when I had gone to an Alexander County, NC, home to look at some apple trees. At the site were a brick home and a dilapidated house trailer. No one was home. Near the trailer was a dog kennel about 5x7 feet, which in the small space included a dog house (no bedding) and a wonderfully friendly little dog. [The dog had to also eat, drink, and "do their business" in

this small space.] She was black and had the short hair of a Lab, but had pointed ears. She was wildly wagging her tail. I caressed her through the wire. I noticed that she had no water on this very hot day. I finally found a spigot and filled her water bowl. In late January I went back to the site to get some apple cuttings for grafting; I looked forward to seeing the little dog again. I was shocked at what I actually saw. The friendly little dog was very subdued and was now skin and bones, she barely wagged her tail. I knew that I would never forgive myself if I simply walked away from this terrible situation. I went over to the trailer and knocked on the door; there were three plump (well fed) people inside. I told them a made-up story that I earlier had a dog that looked just like their dog; it had died and I wondered if they would sell me the dog. They finally said that they would sell the dog for \$50. It took some time to get the kennel door open because it was wired shut; the dog probably had not been out for months. Once the dog was placed in my station wagon I noticed blood. Her vigorous tail wagging against the chain link fencing had left the tip a bloody mass; our vet was narrowly able save her tail.

When I brought the dog home from the vets with its bandaged tail, my wife looked at the protruding rib bones and said, "Thank you for caring enough to save this little dog. She is welcomed at our home. What a lucky little dog." Thus she was named "Lucky".

Lucky is a wonderfully friendly little dog, also being very meek, but energetic. She was readily accepted by the other dogs. She became Pepper's best friend. Several times a day Lucky will come up to me with one of those tapered rubber Kong "balls" in her mouth and a pleading look that says, "Daddy please play ball with me." Lucky always wants to have her friend Pepper involved in ball games. I will throw the Kong ball and then Pepper and Lucky will run to get it. The tapered shape adds to the fun because it causes erratic bounces. Lucky is faster and usually gets to the ball a little sooner, but Pepper is a better finisher and gets the ball half of the time. Then they will return the ball to me. Lucky never tires of the game and it ends when some of the balls are finally lost.

With three dogs and four cats we had a full house, but things happen. I was working with an animal group named Friends of the Shelter. One of the main activities of the Friends was taking dogs from the Forsyth County Animal Shelter to a busy shopping center for adoption showing on Saturday. As a volunteer this involved holding a dog or two dogs on leashes for 4 to 5 hours. One Saturday I was given two Springer Spaniel brothers to show. They were magnificent dogs; the largest was close to a true Springer Spaniel, being off-white with frequent large black splotches of added color. His slightly smaller brother had some Chocolate Lab in his mix; he was all brown, even having brown eyes. I told myself, "What wonderful dogs, surely they will be adopted today." I was wrong; they were not adopted and were returned to the Shelter. The next week I went into the Shelter on Thursday to wash some of the dogs. The two Springer Spaniel brothers were not in the Shelter but were out back in isolation because they now had kennel cough. I was so afraid that the Shelter might "put them down" rather than wait all the weeks needed to get them completely healthy. I was able to convince the Shelter Director to let me take the animals out for fostering until they fully recovered, this was not easy because it had never been done before. Our vet gave them all their needed shots, including one for parvo. We also learned that the brown dog had heart worms. We later named the larger, mostly white dog, Andy, and the comical brown one Charlie. Charlie was soon very sick having been exposed to parvo at the shelter (a very serious and frequently fatal disease). Charlie almost died and it took fluid injections over a weekend

to save him. Once Charlie recovered from the parvo, we then started the lengthy heart worm treatments. By then many months had quickly passed and Charlie and Andy had become indispensable members of our family and so we adopted them.

Andy will frequently come up to my recliner and “sit” staring at me with those large eyes, remaining motionless; behind all of this is the implied suggestion of “a pat would be greatly appreciated”---and generous pats he gets. Charlie is the clown of the family, constantly doing funny things. It is impossible to be in low spirits with Charlie around. When Charlie comes inside, I tell my wife, “The party can begin, Charlie is here!”

I continued working with Friends of the Shelter. We received an urgent call saying that one of the adopted dogs had exhibited behavior problems and that the new owners wanted to return her. They asked me to pick up the dog named Athena. When I saw the very surly husband I wondered if all the problems were just with the dog. Taking the dog to our home was out of the question, so I boarded her at our vets. After about two and a half weeks our vet said, “There is nothing wrong with this dog. She is a great dog.” We then took her to our home where we could observe her ourselves. We had shortened her name to Tina who is a Shiba Inu, a compact Japanese breed. We then took her back to another adoption fair where she was adopted again. Three days later we received a call that the lady wanted to surrender Tina; there were problems with their very small dog and Tina frequently cried when being left in the lady’s kennel. My wife and I both realized that Tina had been through too much already and she deserved a good stable home, ours.

Thus we then had six dogs; these are fairly large dogs ranging from 45 to 95 pounds. The dogs are welcome to come into our house as often as they like during the day. When each new dog arrived we had to teach them to not chase our cats. This usually took about five weeks; the exception was the lively Charlie who took eight months. The dogs sleep inside at night; we have six double pads arranged in a horseshoe pattern around our bed.

The big event every day for Tom and the six dogs is the “treat run” into town, where I load them into the station wagon to take them into Clemmons for a special doggie treat. Getting the dogs into the station wagon involves an interesting ritual. Tina tries very hard to be the first in, to assure herself of getting the “shot gun” position beside me. Andy and Lucky also quickly get into the station wagon. Chaco, Pepper, and Charlie will not get in the station wagon at this point. I then drive the 700 feet to our gate. Chaco soon shows up. He will not get into the car until Andy gets out and exchanges barks with him. Next Pepper finally arrives and gets in. Charlie runs around and plays until I am just about to leave before finally getting in. Once we are under way, Charlie positions himself just behind my right shoulder so he can lick my cheek for the first half mile. We then get a biscuit which can be split six ways or a beef stick or something else yummy.

These dogs have greatly enriched our lives. We have given them much but they have given back a hundred fold in terms of love, devotion, and making our life much more fun. When I visit homes in my apple search I frequently see dogs that are chained or in small kennels. This saddens me because I know all the fun the people are missing by not being more actively involved with their dogs. The dogs are also not having fun; they are social creatures just like we humans and chaining deprives them of the badly needed interaction. These wonderful dogs can add joy to your life; they are ready to give unconditional love.

I hope that 2008 will be a prosperous year for you and your family!

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