



## Pet Talk

Welcome to *Pet Talk*, an occasional column about homeless pets and related topics. Last month we discussed so-called Longtimers—that is, dogs that have been at the Flathead County Animal Shelter for quite some time now.

Well, how about Shorttimers, what's it like for them?

Dogs, like humans, are creatures of habit. That is, they have strong bonds to their “packs,” whether they be human or other dogs (or even cats!). And they develop strong attachments to physical environments (i.e., their homes).

So what happens when those bonds are shattered, such as when a dog or cat suddenly finds itself having to adjust to the confines of a strange new animal shelter?

There are many reasons for such misfortunes. For example, perhaps a longtime pet owner recently died, or financial hardship has impacted an owner. Of course, there are also cruelty cases, such as when dogs and cats are abandoned by irresponsible uncaring owners—which occurred with my 2 adopted dogs years ago.

Just imagine spending long days and nights

in a kennel measuring just a few square feet in size. It would be bad enough spending just a night or two, like strays often do, but how about being incarcerated for weeks on end!

Below are just a few examples of recent (October) surrenders at Flathead County Animal Shelter.

First up is cute **Baby Girl**:



And here's sad-faced **Korra**:



How about flop-eared **Giles**:



And here's spunky **Jackie**:



What's that—you prefer cats instead? Then how about cute **Gomez**:



Or hopeful **Percey**:



And so on . . . totaling nearly 30 potential adoptees at the shelter to date!

So what's the problem with being surrendered, even to well-managed shelters? As we discussed last month, here's some info from *boundangels.org*:

**“The energy of a shelter is completely overwhelming to most dogs. This energy does one of two things: Fight or flight. Many dogs will completely shut down in this situation, (and) others will act out in response. I call this Kennel Syndrome.”**

And more, from *www.carrymypet*:

**“(Caged dog syndrome) can lead to depression, anxiety, aggression, and other emotional disturbances in dogs. Signs of CDS include excessive barking, pacing, scratching at the crate door, anxiety, aggression, and even self-harm, such as biting or licking themselves excessively.”**

Yet, despite such factors, I'm continually amazed at the dogs' capacity for joy when out in the play yard.

Whether short- or longtimers, maybe the poor orphans just know that adopters will one day come to the rescue! So, if that's you please phone Flathead County Animal Shelter at (406) 752-1310 to schedule a meet-and-greet.

Well that's it for today's Pet Talk. As you can see, pet homelessness is a serious issue, both locally and nationally. So please

support animal shelters in any way that you can.

And don't forget the generous adoption incentives at Flathead County Animal Shelter. First, a gracious donation from a local animal lover has allowed the shelter to substantially reduce its adoption fees. Flathead Shelter Friends also offers a Senior Pet Voucher, which pays up to \$350 toward veterinary care for 7+ year-old adopted pets.

For more information, please contact Flathead County Animal Shelter, phone number (406) 758-1310, or visit the website at <https://flathead.mt.gov/departments/directory/animal>.

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***Personal donations are always appreciated!***  
***For more information, see***  
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