

Bartlett's News Briefs



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THE LATE ROCKAWAY RICKY AND HIS GIVING PAWS OF LOVE

Donations to this little guy's fund helps struggling Pacificans meet their pet needs

BY JEAN BARTLETT



Jean Bartlett photo

Rockaway Ricky in 2015 at the Pacific Java Café in Pacifica's Rockaway Beach Plaza.

One unexpected day, Pacifican Christine Stahl met a little fluff ball and she called him Rockaway Ricky.

Ricky had not ridden much in a car before he met Christine. He got nervous. He got carsick. But Ricky and Christine went everywhere together, and so the same thing that happens to the many as soon as they take in Pacifica's spectacular coastline from their car seat, happened to Ricky. He fell in love. When Ricky realized that this mechanical chariot was his doorway to running on the beach, he had a whole new opinion and was raring to ride.

Ricky was a Schnoodle, a cross between a Schnauzer and a Poodle, and he became the official mascot of his mom's place of business: Lommori/Stahl Group of RE/MAX Star Properties in Rockaway Beach. His mom, a Pacifican since 1986, grew up with cats and had never owned a dog until Ricky. Yet the two knew immediately, they were family.

Christine helped Ricky establish a blog and Facebook page. She brought him into the office and out with clients. Together they visited friends with dogs, all sizes, cats, all sizes, and Christine taught Ricky to exude his inner friendliness with a wagging tail rather than a proud display of barkiness. He taught Christine, with some guided enthusiasm from his veterinarian, how to make homemade dog food and dog treats. Christine marveled over just how much Ricky taught her and others.

"He teaches patience, devotion and kindness," she told this writer in a 2015 *Pacifica Tribune* interview. "He changes the atmosphere when people come in the office. He relaxes people. They want to be his friend and he wants to be theirs."

One day in 2018, Ricky's highly photographed doggie profile gave way to an idea – a calendar featuring Pacifica business owners and their dogs. With Brenda Simpson (owner of Bijou Blue Photography) on board, Christine, Pete Lommorri and Brenda decided they would produce a 2019 calendar, "Dog Days of Pacifica," subtitled, "The Working Life of a Pacifica Pooch." Jennifer Hoover was also brought on board to do the calendar design. Photo shoots featuring four-legged friends—Rocky Road, Sir Charles, Dude, Daphne, Carmella and many other natural stars—began with gusto. Rockaway Ricky was getting ready to book his closeup when the bad news came. Ricky had a tumor in his bowel and it was cancer.

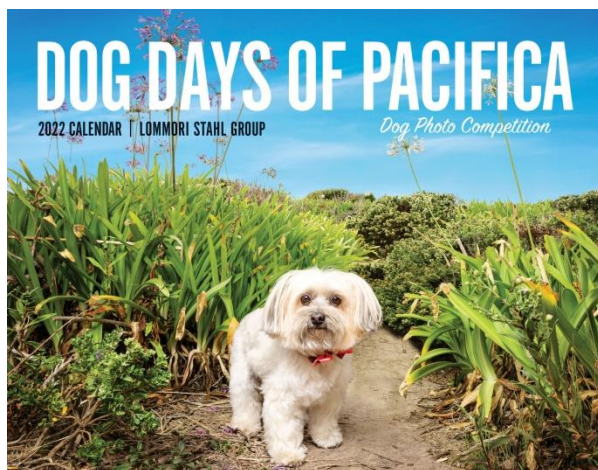
"The options were: unpredictable surgery; unpredictable chemotherapy; or to take him home and when he was no longer able to go to the bathroom, I would need to have him euthanized," Christine said. "I chose the latter."

Ricky got his page in the 2019 calendar. He is sitting on top of Pete Lommori's Harley. The caption reads, "Highway to Heaven."

13-year-old Ricky died peacefully at home on August 16, 2018, surrounded by family and friends. In her grief, Christine began to focus on one of Ricky's intuitive life lessons. "When you love your pet, you want to take care of them. They certainly take care of you."

Christine thought about Pacifica pet owners who were financially struggling, including the homeless and seniors on limited budgets. Often they place their pet's care needs above their own. "They don't love their pets any less than I loved Ricky."

And so the Rockaway Ricky Memorial Fund, a special fund under Pacificans Care, came into being. The fund assists with the pet care needs for Pacifica seniors, the homeless and families in need. Donation funds are distributed by Pacificans Care, a 501(c) 3 organization, to the Pacifica Resource Center and through Pacifica Senior Services.



In addition, the Lommori Stahl Group "Dog Days of Pacifica" calendar (Bijou Blue Photography) has since become an annual event. For 2022's calendar—out now and ready for display in your home—they had their first photo contest. Out of 55 entries, 13 dogs were chosen as month headliners. (Though all 55 entries made the calendar's centerfold.) The money for this incredibly charming, heartfelt canine calendar that is for anyone who has ever loved a dog – goes to Rockaway Ricky's Memorial Fund. This year's front-of-the-calendar headliner is 9-year-old Havanese, Charlie.

To order a 2022 "Dog Days of Pacifica" calendar, click [here](#). To learn more about Rockaway Ricky visit: www.rockawayricky.org.



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