

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

On the positive side: Sanctuary serves beagles, basset hounds

By Bill Hart

Posted: 08/16/2009 12:00:00 AM MDT

Meet Bill and Linda Hart. Bill was born and raised in Ohio and worked on farms from the age of 8 until he was 21.

This is where his love and respect for animals developed. As a child the family had pets and his mother bred and raised poodles and collies. He always had dogs and cats in his life.

My wife, Linda, and I are staunch advocates for the care and well being of all animals. We believe there is much work to be done to reform animal rights and issues, especially those not in sync with modern times. We have been involved with beagle and basset hound rescue for more than five years.

We started by helping the beagle rescue in Santa Fe. When the owner suddenly passed away, we and several others picked up the pieces and dove head first into the rescue world. What an eye opening experience it has been!

Linda and I never knew how bad the plight of these dogs was until we got deep into rescue work. We have directly or indirectly been involved with the rescue of hundreds of dogs all over the state of New Mexico and assisted with rescues from other states as well. Nothing is more pleasing than to see one of our rescue dogs go to a forever loving home! On the other hand, nothing saddens us more than to see the tragic lives of some of these animals. Nothing can cause more anguish than to see the indifference or abuse these animals receive at the hand of what is called our human race.

It is not often that an active and fulfilling mission in life is bestowed upon you after retiring from a chaotic lifestyle. Linda and I arrived in Las Cruces nearly eight years ago and began building our "certified wildlife habitat" sanctuary.

Our Southern New Mexico Basset Hound/Beagle Rescue was gradually developed as we found ourselves needing to increase our pet family to share in the fruits of our labor. It began with the loss of our faithful companion of 13 years, Penny, a red toy poodle.

We obtained Scoopy, our first beagle pup, to aide Penny in her failing years. After Penny "crossed over the rainbow bridge," we adopted Jake, our alpha beagle, from the beagle rescue in Santa Fe. Then, Gracie, a corgie mix, arrived as a rescue from the middle of a busy street. In a few months Oscar, our first basset hound pup, was also rescued from the middle of the road.

At this point it was time to establish our rescue and help save basset hounds and beagles from that type of neglect. Peaches, a petite basset hound/doxie mix and Angel, a beautiful female basset hound were both rescued within weeks of each other. Angel came to us from the shelter with a fractured pelvis. With corrective surgery, she is now doing fine.

To facilitate our mission we recently completed what we believe to be the largest dog house in the area. It is the size of a garage, 12-feet by 17-feet. It is an insulated building with heat and AC and has a cathedral ceiling, windows with curtains, and is equipped with a radio and a TV will be arriving soon.

The house has a fenced run area attached, 30-feet-by-100-feet, and a shaded outdoor porch. This building was constructed specifically for fostering rescued dogs, separated from our own family dogs.

The first tenants to occupy the new house arrived mid-July, two beautiful basset hound sisters who were rescued from our local shelter. Both are heart worm positive and currently receiving treatment and will stay in our care until healthy enough to be adopted.

Needless to say, they love it! We are passionate in our belief that animals deserve the best care and homes we can provide. We will continue to work to improve conditions for the animals in our community.

Bill Hart serves on the board of directors of the [Humane Society of Southern New Mexico](#). The Humane Society of Southern New Mexico offers many services including a pet help line, run by volunteers. For more information, call (575) 523-8020.