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There's a smile beneath that muzzle

No longer on death row, Brindi's odyssey ends happily

By SHERRI BORDEN COLLEY Staff Reporter
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Francesca Rogier sits with her dog Brindi in front of her home on Monday. (Tim Krochak / Staff)

"Reunited, and it feels so good. Reunited, 'cause we understood. There's one perfect fit, and sugar, this one is it. We both are so excited 'cause we're reunited. Hey, hey."

Francesca Rogier could have easily serenaded her beloved dog Brindi with this soulful Peaches & Herb ballad from 30 years ago when the two were reunited last Friday at their East Chezzetcook home after a two-year separation.



Francesca Rogier walks Brindi past the sign she had placed in front of her home Monday. (Tim Krochak / Staff)

"It's just a feeling of love," Rogier said Monday. "Dogs are for some people just possessions, they're just something you have. For other people, they're really a partnership or relationship of some kind. And that's what she is for me, she's like my partner and so it's like getting back together with your partner."

For the past month, while Brindi was still under the care of others, the two had been seeing each other almost every day and working with a dog trainer a couple of times a week in Porters Lake. Then Brindi was able to come home.

"Once she knew she was coming in the car, oh my God . . . she was so thrilled, and she just was falling back into her good old self," Rogier said. "We went to the shopping centre so I could get some champagne. We visited the hardware store where people know me and

a couple of other places like that, and everybody was really surprised and happy."

Rogier's reunion with Brindi came after a lengthy and expensive court battle that pitted Rogier against Halifax Regional Municipality. Brindi was seized in 2008 after she escaped from Rogier's home and attacked another dog. Brindi was already under a muzzle order at the time.

Animal Services ordered Brindi put down but Rogier took the municipality to Nova Scotia Supreme Court, where a judge ruled that parts of the city's bylaw exceeded municipal powers, so Brindi received a reprieve.

But the municipality pursued the case, and Rogier was found guilty in February of violating the animal control bylaw. A lawyer representing the municipality then asked the court to order Brindi euthanized, but Judge Alanna Murphy rejected that option in late April.

Brindi was held at an SPCA site for about 20 months until she was moved to the municipality's new dog pound. For the last month, she was kept in a kennel at Porters Lake.

Now that Rogier has complied with the judge's orders to complete training courses and put up a fence at her home, she does not have to go back to court.

Brindi still must be muzzled whenever she's outside, unless she's in a proper dog run approved by Animal Services. If she's being walked, her handler must be at least 18.

Municipal spokeswoman Shaune MacKinlay confirmed that Rogier has complied with the

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judge's instructions.

"We had a letter from the trainer saying the dog had met the requirements of the training, and we also went out to have a look at the fence to ensure that the fence was the proper enclosure for the dog, that requirement was met as well," MacKinlay said Monday.

"We had some indication from the court that the requirements of the court had been satisfied, and our requirements had been satisfied, so the dog went home."

The Rogier case set a precedent in successfully challenging a portion of the animal control bylaw, MacKinlay said.

"It means that we have to change it in accordance with the court ruling," she said. "We can seize a dog but the municipality's ability to euthanize a dog after seizure is what was in question."

Rogier said no one should be afraid of Brindi.

"She was never a threat to people and she never caused serious injury to the dog," she said. "She has her muzzle order and I have the fence and I have an excellent trainer advising me now, so she's going to be an even better dog."

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Dog owner

FRANCESCA ROGIER

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