

Harold



The week of our beloved Orville's death, we sent his Obituary to family and friends and received many notes of condolence. The notes were helpful to us. Folks losing a beloved pet grieve and Ruth and I had trouble saying Orville's name without getting tears in our eyes. One response we received was from our breeder, who indicated that she was retiring from her many years of breeding dachshunds and wondered if we would like to consider adopting her last male puppy, which she was keeping as a prospective stud before deciding to retire.

She said the puppy was seven months old, needed more love than she could give, had lived in her home not in the kennel and was a **miniature, red, wire-haired dachshund**. We wondered if we were ready for another dog so soon after Orville was gone and Ruth's statement (that her dad used to say), "When you fall off of the pony, you have to get back on and ride," reminded us that we were "dog people" and probably wouldn't be happy until we got another four-legged

friend. We consulted several dog owners who had recently lost their beloved dogs and they indicated that adopting a new dog had been the perfect therapy for them. We decided to visit Sandi's kennel and see if we were interested.

When we arrived, she had this seven-month, blonde and black, seven-pound, wire-haired dachshund ready for us to see. He was playing with some Shih Tzu dogs and appeared to be a little too wild for us. I picked him up and he cuddled into my arms like he was ready for a nap! A real charmer... and he whispered, "Do what it takes to get me and I'll be a great dog for you and that cutie-pie you brought with you." (Ruth liked it when he said that!) Sandi said she would hold him so we would have time to decide, but we decided to bring him home. That night, I had a dream that Ruth and I got another dog and had named him Harold. I told her about that dream the next morning; she liked that name, as it was certainly divinely inspired. The next morning our wonderful veterinarian, Dr. Wood, gave him a physical and pronounced him in great health. Later that day, Ruth and Jill took him to the groomers, another person named Sandy, and he came home looking very stylish.

Several days have passed since we brought Harold home and we believe we have made the correct decision...we think more about the future and less about the past. At times, I almost feel disrespectful to Orville that we have added Harold so soon after Orville's death, but Ruth says folks feel happier for us (but now just think that we are a little nuts). We said we are dog people!

We took Harold on a walk last night and passed by a neighbor who loved Orville and asked us to bring Orville to visit him last year while he was recovering from a stroke. We told him what happened to Orville and he got big tears in his eyes, reached out to hold Harold and while holding Harold said, "Orville was a fine dog...and you are lucky to have Harold too." He went on to say that " I will never forget your dogs' names as my grandfather's name was Orville Harold!"

Well, there you have it...a death...a dream...a call from a retiring breeder...a quote remembered from Ruth's dad...a neighbor's endorsement... and, we have a new member of our family.

There are too many toys in our home that need to be chewed, too many hikes that need to be accompanied, too many potential burglars who need to be barked at, too many snuggles yet to be shared...too many excuses for leaving parties early that need to be said, and so much love that needs to be shared.

We have so many great memories of the past six years and know Harold will add some new ones (which unfortunately for you, I will probably share). We feel blessed to have our family and our friends (both two and four legged). We can't wait for all of you to meet Harold...all you dog people are going to fall in love with him, as we already have!

April 2013

Postscript. Six weeks have passed since Harold arrived in our hearts, err home. He is now a full-fledged member of the Saltzman household and has adapted to nearly all of our rules and regulations (Except for the paper chewing). He loves playing with his (Orville's) toys and wants to be near us in the house or yard. He doesn't run away when left unleashed and is very friendly...to everyone except our grandson, Andrew, who gets a guttural growl if he makes any move nearby. We don't understand this behavior, as Andrew is always nice to him.

Heather, our Veterinary, says Harold is full-grown but will add a pound or two as he matures...surely never topping nine pounds. We found that one of our best friends, Jack Fender's middle name is Harold and that another friend, Barb Badger, had uncles who were named Orville, Harold and Norman, and suggested if we add another dog, it should be named Norman...we don't think that will happen.

One funny thing happened regarding the name of Harold...while at a Pet's Mart one day with Harold, Jill noticed he was wandering away and rather emphatically shouted, "Harold, come here!" A man ran down the aisle and said, "What do you want?" His name was Harold and was quite amused that we had a dog named Harold. When I told a friend that we had briefly considered naming Harold, Norman (his name), he said he would have loved having our dog named after him.

It was the correct decision to get another dog right away. He lasted one night in the laundry room and has now moved to our bed, where he goes to sleep before us and has to be awakened in the morning to go outside. He doesn't take up much room and loves to snuggle up...a living, breathing hot water bottle.

I wasn't as sure as Ruth that we should get a new dog so soon after Orville's death, but Ruth was right again (That Ruth) and it has helped us move on in a positive way. Some day soon, we will have our family ceremony when we scatter Orville's ashes in Marvin's Garden and in the lake (Where we want some of our ashes spread). We have already moved the headstones of Jill's and the boys' dogs (Pooter and Sady) to Marvin's Garden. We received more than fifty emails when we announced we had got Harold and one of the nicest was Janet Dix's who said, "Orville would want you two to have a new companion." I am sure she was/is right.... and, when we do have that ceremony, Harold will be with us when we all give Orville his final Goodbye.

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