

Welcome to the latest edition of the CQ! Inside this issue, we introduce our newly elected board members, take a look back at the key personalities of the Modern Chinook era who helped pull our breed back from near extinction, and share details on our upcoming annual calendar photo contest. Plus, if you're in the area, be sure to catch the Chinook exhibit at the Tamworth History Center before it closes on October 10 – you won't want to miss it!



Chinook at the Tamworth History Center in Tamworth, NH

Features

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Personal Message from the President

By Marty Wilson, COA President

To my fellow Chinook enthusiasts, owners, and breeders,

It is an absolute honor to step into the role of President for this upcoming term. Our Chinooks are so much more than a rare breed – they are our companions, our working partners, and the heart of our tight-knit community. As we look toward the 2026 – 2028 term, my primary goal is to ensure the COA remains a welcoming, transparent, and supportive home for all of us.

Whether you are a long-time breeder preserving our history or a first-time owner falling in love with your pup, your voice matters here. Together with this incredible board, I look forward to working alongside you to protect, celebrate, and grow our beloved breed. Thank you for your trust, your passion, and everything you do for our dogs.



Marty & Miles

Two Years in Review – 2024-2026

A recap from Past President, Daniela Metz

It has been a great pleasure serving our Chinook Community as the president of the COA these past 2 years. The COA is dedicated to their Chinook families and offers key programs to foster activities, get-togethers and education around the Chinook and the board has worked hard these past few years to deliver and improve on our core events:

The Active Chinook Program (ACP) offers rewards and titles for Chinooks who participate in a variety of activities that highlight the diversity and working nature of our beloved breed. A huge thank you to Rick Prausa and his team, who have done an amazing job reviewing and improving the program these past years.

The COA prides itself in producing the Chinook Quarterly Newsletter detailing health resources, fun and educational community updates and breed history. A big thank you to Jon Jolly for taking the initiative to making the CQ a fun read! A link to the CQ is sent to our members via email and you can find it on the COA web and FB sites, and I hope you will enjoy this issue of the CQ!

Lastly, the COA hosts the Chinook National Specialty every year. This is a unique and truly “special” event that brings together our members and their Chinooks from all over the US, for an unforgettable few days of social, educational and fun activities, as well as the big National Specialty conformation show that crowns the National Best of Chinooks!! Due to a lack of a Bench Chair on the board these past years, this activity would have fallen by the wayside, had it not been for the

commitment and dedication of some key members of our community to put together two memorable stand-alone Specialties! Huge gratitude to Karen and David Schiller, Diana Fowler and Mary Malkiel for helping me put together an amazing event for the 2023 Specialty in Loveland, Colorado. It was a super fun and educational committee to work with, and I still miss our numerous online evenings, chatting about the upcoming event. Similarly, our pre-Christmas 2025 Specialty in Ocala, Florida was a huge success, and fun was had by all that attended. My gratitude goes to my 2025 committee, Diana Fowler, Rachael Davis, Pam Turner and Nancy Stevenson. These Specialties would not have been possible without the dedication and tremendous hard work of these organizers behind the scenes! I am very excited for Kristine Chandler, who recently took the position of the Bench Chair on the COA board, and I can't wait to see what wonderful venues she will dedicate to our future COA Chinook Specialties.

Apart from our commitment to our key programs, the COA also made renewed efforts on obtaining a 501(c)3 status. A law firm was engaged, the required updates and publication of the bylaws were approved and submitted with the 501(c)3 application. I thank our now President Marty Wilson and our recent secretary, Pam Turner, for taking the initiative on these efforts and we are all hopeful for a positive outcome!

It takes a village to run an organization – our village is a wonderful group of dedicated and hard-working board members, who love our precious Chinook breed beyond borders. It was an honor to serve our Chinook families as part of our “village” these past two years to bring you updates on Chinook matters, and to bring us all closer together as one family.



Photo of my two loving sisters, Malina and Kiana

Meet Your 2026 – 2028 Board

Stronger Together for the Chinook!

A new term is officially here, bringing an exciting chapter of dedication and leadership to the COA! Whether stepping into a dynamic new role or continuing their trusted service, every individual on this team shares an undeniable passion for our legendary breed. From honoring their historic legacy as New Hampshire's premier freighting sled dogs to supporting them in the backyard, on the trail, and in the show ring, this team is ready to *pull* together for our community.

Get to know the passionate crew working behind the scenes for you:

Our Newly Elected Executive Officers – These familiar faces are stepping up to bring fresh energy and strategic vision to our executive team:

- **Fern Richardson (Vice President)**: Ready to work hand-in-paw with Marty to support all of our upcoming club initiatives.
- **Jessica Dwyer (Secretary)**: The organizational mastermind keeping us connected, organized, and running smoothly behind the scenes.
- **Kristine Chandler (Bench Chair)**: Bringing her sharp eye, expertise, and passion to our upcoming breed showcases and specialty rings.

The Backbone: Our Continuing Board Members – We are incredibly grateful for the steady hands, deep experience, and unwavering dedication of our returning team:

- **Marty Wilson (President)**: Continuing his service on the board, Marty takes the helm with a clear vision for moving the COA forward while honoring our breed's rare heritage.
- **Rachael Davis (Treasurer)**: Guarding our resources with precision and care to ensure a prosperous and secure financial future for the association.
- **Jon Jolly (Communications Chair) & Kristy Jolly (Membership Chair)**: Our unstoppable dynamic duo, keeping the Chinook family informed, welcomed, and tightly bonded across the miles.

Our Specialists: Appointed Chairs – These individuals pour their unique talents and hearts into the vital programs that safeguard the very future of our breed:

- **Karen Hinchy (Health & Genetics / Register)**: Rocking two critical hats to protect our Chinooks' vital genetic diversity, overall health, and official lineage records.
- **Bob Cottrell (Historian)**: The keeper of the flame, documenting our rich legacy and keeping Arthur Walden's incredible history alive.
- **Brenda Dean (Rescue)**: Leading with pure heart, compassion, and grit to give Chinooks in need a second chance at a beautiful life.
- **Rick Prausa (Active Chinook Program)**: Celebrating the drive, incredible stamina, natural pulling power, and temperament of our dogs out on the trail and in our homes.
- **Tyler Sweeney (Regional Activities Chair)**: Helping coordinate regional meetups and local events to help Chinook owners connect and get involved in their areas.

A Quick Note From Us to You

The COA is only as strong as the community it serves. As we kick off this 2026 – 2028 term, our promise to you is to be accessible, supportive, and active partners. We are here to listen, support our incredible breeders and owners, and celebrate our dogs together.

When you see these folks at our next Specialty show, out on the trail, or online, please say hello, swap a favorite Chinook story, and join us in wishing them a fantastic term ahead!

Personalities

A Modern History Series article by Ginger Corley (Rain Mountain Chinooks & Enatai Chinook Crosses)

Of those involved in the early days of the COA, some are still active in various ways, if not breeding. You should be aware of their contributions and if you're lucky, you may meet some of them one day.

The powerhouse behind the 1980s resurgence must be **Neil and Marra Wollpert**. They were the ones who discovered the remaining Chinooks at Sukee Kennels in Maine and financed most of the costs of obtaining and spreading out the eleven breedable dogs that were remaining. Neil was the first President of the COA and may have served multiple terms over the years. Marra was Ms. Organization. She spent countless hours on the phone, writing hundreds of letters, and all in a pre- or early-computer era. Almost single handed, Marra put on the first "Chinook Round-Up" in 1990. The first week of April was cold in Dayton, Ohio but she got a large representation of Chinooks and their families there (including me). (More on this in a future Modern History Series article.) They opened their home to guests on multiple occasions and raised several litters under their Singing Woods kennel name. Neil has passed away but Marra is still living in Ohio.

One of the exhibits during that first Chinook Round-Up was a demonstration of Utility-level obedience by **Donna Boatwright** and her dog, Singing Woods Siri [Perry Greene Barrow x Perry Greene Honey]. Donna had been doing obedience with her Siberians before she obtained her first Chinook from the Wollperts. Later she was integral to the first Chinook Cross program in the 1990s, first with WoodsRunner X Alyeska [Boreals Tok O' the Town Sinook x WoodsRunner Lucille] and eventually her Cloudburst Chinooks breeding program. She was a strong advocate for training and worked with several organizations that trained Chinooks (and other breeds) as Service Dogs. Along the way Donna served in several capacities on the COA Board, including one term as President. Most recently she acted as an informal editor for the Chinook Quarterly when the current Communications Chair (Jon Jolly) was just starting.

Donna passed away roughly a year ago, but the Cloudburst name still appears in pedigrees today. She is greatly missed. Donna and Marra Wollpert were close friends, and I had a great deal of fun with them.

Bob and Connie Jones were often the calming voices in the room. Their WoodsRunner program produced excellent Chinooks that had the drive to run. Bob's ultimate was running the Sandwich Notch 30 with a team of Chinooks they had bred and successfully finishing the race. Both were COA Presidents at different times. Bob brought the COA into the world of technology, though at times we kicked and screamed.

Both Joneses had hearts as big as those of their dogs. Bob passed away a few years ago though Connie still lives in their home in Portland, Maine. I'm proud to consider her a close friend.

Joyce Maley of Hurricane Chinooks was the voice of logic. A career Air Force officer, she laid out plans for her breeding program and worked to achieve them. Over the years, I counted roughly sixteen (yes, 16!) National Specialty Best of Breed awards along with several UKC Best in Show awards with multiple generations of her dogs – North Wind Kodiak, Hurricane Mackenzie, Hurricane Chaser, and Hurricane Katrina are just a few. She was known for having strong hips and smooth movement.



I could tell stories about Joyce since we were close friends. The epitome was when I was home on medical leave after a nasty traffic accident. I'd had a conversation the day before with Joyce and had moaned about how my home computer had just died; then the doorbell rang and there was a large box on the porch. Joyce had sent me a computer! Her reason? She needed me to be able to receive emails and look over pedigrees for her.

Joyce sadly died of metastatic cancer in 2012. She had worked tirelessly on behalf of the COA from the time we began until shortly before her death.

There are still more people who you should know but that's enough for this first issue. In the future, you'll meet Richalene Kelsay, Susan Fletcher, and others who contributed to our early-modern history.

2027 Calendar Contest

By Kristy Jolly, COA Membership Chair

As you pack up the summer gear and settle into the crisp autumn air, it's time to start going through your favorite photo memories – the annual COA Chinook Calendar Contest is just around the corner!

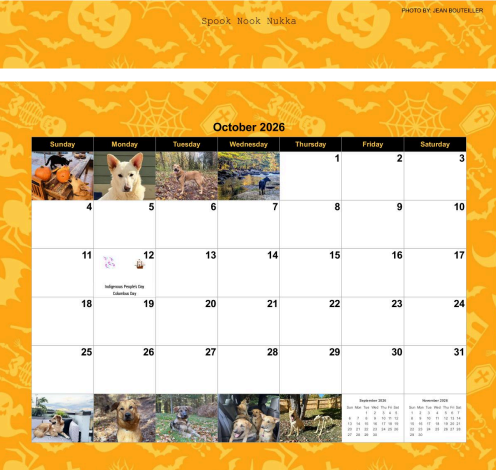
Keep an eye on your inbox in the coming weeks for complete submission guidelines, entry rules, and official deadlines. As a quick reminder, you must be a current, active COA member to submit photos.

[Join the COA - Chinook Owners Association](#)

Photo submissions due coming soon

We can't wait to see your incredible Chinooks & Chinook crosses showcasing their best moments from this past year!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Kristy at membership@chinook.org.



Chinook History Hub

By Jon Jolly, COA Communications Chair



May 25 – October 10, 2026 (10am-2pm Wed & Sat)
Tamworth History Center (THC) Chinook Exhibit

Visit Tamworth, NH (Chinook's birthplace) for a special 2026 exhibit

The Tamworth History Center (THC) is open from Memorial Day through Columbus Day each year. Hours are 10am-2pm Wed and Sat during these warm months, but also by appointment year-round.

This year's theme is Chinook!

Normally there is a small Chinook display that varies in size, but this year the Chinook exhibit fills just about all the rooms! My wife Kristy and I made our trek out from Arizona to visit this special place and highly recommend it for lovers of Chinook history!



For more details, please visit <https://www.tamworthhistorycenter.org/> or email Bob Cottrell at historian@chinook.org.

Outreach Details of all Bob's NH Humanities outreach programs can be found at this link: <https://www.nhhumanities.org/programs/harnessing-history-on-the-trail-of-new-hampshires-state-dog-the-chinook>

- While you're in Tamworth, check out Bob's curated [Chinook Trail Tour](#) (we did!)
- Take a photo of your Chinook next to the new statue outside the museum

Membership Report – Mar to Aug

Current Membership Total: 284

Special thanks to breeders who purchased discounted memberships for their new puppy owners:
Desert Sol Chinooks (9), Granite Hill Chinooks (6), GreatMountain Chinooks (2), Kennebec River Chinooks (2)

New & Renewed Members (139)

Alaska Amy Vagedes. Arizona Tiina Perlman. California Anne Lynch, Bobbi Babineau-Lounds, Catherine McCarthy-Payne, Elaine Edler, James Collora, Keith Bogart, Leigh Conner, Mike Sheehan, Patrick Treacy, Triona Gogarty. Colorado April Matava, Astrid Lampey, Debra Meese, Jill Szewczyk, Kim Robinson, Martin Wilson, Paul Delia, Victoria Escalle, Walt Madden. Connecticut Bonnie Kreitler, Jean Bouteiller. Delaware Justin Damadio. Florida Angela Coleman, Daniela Metz, Jack Duffy, Kristi Berland, Laura Smith, Nancy Fishinger, Natasha Rueschoff, Rachel Butterfield, Sandy Smith. Georgia Lauren Legener. Illinois Edy Lotharius. Indiana Brendan Aldrich, Tamara Anderson. Kentucky Todd Roberts. Maine Alice Knapp, Brenda Dean, Darin Murphy, Emma Clayton, Rick Skoglund, Robbie Portela, Tom Reynolds. Maryland Kali Hart. Massachusetts Carol Zuckerman, Craig Ross, Dr. Paul Spurlock, Donna Russell, Elise Cobb, Jude Griffin, Karen Tempesta, Pamela Mulveyhill, Richard Soucy. Michigan Adam Zwickle, Hannah Collison, Jessica Dreyer, John Booth, Ted Dohnal. Missouri Jane Cox. Montana Kristy McRae. New Hampshire Andrew Coppens, Carol Carlson, Dwight Emery, Jake Stabile, Jessica Mack, Jill Pertain, Kristina Calabrese, LillyAnna Caron, Maria Calabrese, Marin Emery, Megan Pothier,	New Hampshire (cont.) Michael Venti, Morrie Killian, Patricia Martel, Peter Bell, Roz Rolland. New Jersey Karen Hinchy, Tara Laposa. New York Christopher Appoldt, Danielle Welch, Jennifer Esposito, John Habermehl, MJ Crance, Rachel Sayadoff. Ohio Carol Gifford, Karen Toigo, Lydia Leclerc. Oregon Ann Sulzer, Carrie Allison, Cindy Lee Morgan, Kay Lee Brown, Kira Meyers, Marisa Huffman, Sally Gallagher. Pennsylvania Delcan Mullhall, Fern Richardson, Marina Guvakova, Rachael Davis. South Carolina Nancy Stevenson. Tennessee Bryan Smith, Kristine Chandler. Texas Marlene Goist. Vermont Brett Visger, Christine Eggleton, Karen Bourque, Sandford Bragg. Virginia Rhea Moore, Rick Prausa, Robin Anderson. Washington Chance Felisky, Christine Foss, Lisa Yeager, Margi Nowak, Matt Bolender, Michael Schmidt, Owen Bitas, Sarah Garrison, Sherry Hung, Todd Allen. Wisconsin Allison Abbott, Katy Kopplin, Mary Schatz, Shelley Stewart. International (Manitoba) Michael Paluk. International (Ontario) Melody Matthews Meilleur, Wendy Hansen. Puppy Memberships Not Yet Signed Up Ali Tozier, Amber Whittle, Cesar Hernandez, Diana Fallon, Jane Durning, Laura Quintanilla, Margaret Johnson, Michael O'Keefe.
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Health Flash

Dogs with health tests completed recently

The COA would like to thank all owners that have obtained health tests for their Chinooks! All owners are strongly encouraged to submit health tests to the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), regardless of diagnoses by the attending veterinarian. As you submit results, please ensure you have initialed to make any results public - the more we know, the easier it is for breeders to work on making the next generation of Chinooks even healthier. Go to the [OFA website](#) for information on these and other Chinooks.

Name	Hips	Eyes	Other
Barkerville Ripley	Fair		
Barkerville Ruby Jean		Normal	
Barkerville Statia By the Mtn	Excellent	Normal	Elbows: Normal
Barkerville Tallulah		Normal	
Desert Sol Bear Bogart	Good	Normal	
Desert Sol Mau Luc		Normal	
Desert Sol Maybird Snow		Normal	
Desert Sol Rise from Fire	Good		
Enatai Chukchi Arcadian Calisto		Normal w/ BO	
Enatai Chukchi Sweet Song of Lyra		Normal	MD1 / ITG / BCA / DM: Clear
Ferncroft Birch Intervale		Normal w/ BO	
Ferncroft Landslide Nicks		Normal	MD1 / ITG / BCA / DM: Clear
Ferncroft McCrillis	Good		
Ferncroft Old Paugus	Fair		
Ferncroft Tormund Evan		Normal	
Ferncroft Zealand Notch Tundra	Pre-Good		
Granite Hill Fearless	Good	Normal	
GreatMountain Willing & Able		Normal	
GreatMountain Lovely Juniper		Normal	
Lake Time Calisi	Good		
Laughing Mountain Arlo	Excellent		Elbows: Normal
Maple Lane Daniella	Good		
Maple Lane Nyx	Good	Normal	Elbows: Normal

Nittany's Green Time Keeper		Normal	
Rivertrail Tiara Nee Mischief	Good		
Vanguard Aurora Borealis	Good	Normal	MD1 / ITG / IVDD / DM: Clear Elbows: Normal
Vanguard Harmony			Elbows: Normal
Vanguard Karbu	Excellent		Elbows: Normal
Vanguard Sofus	Excellent		Elbows: Normal



Ferncroft Zealand Notch Tundra by Bryan Flagg

Litter Basket

Recent & upcoming litters - <https://chinook.org/litters/>

Dam	Sire	Due/Born Date	Location	Kennel
Ferncroft Kala Rosie	Barkerville Takoda	Born: 5/4-5/5/2026	IL	Ferncroft Chinooks
Tennessee River Sol Ghost	Wachusett Gulbrun Regis	Born: 5/26/2026	NH	Desert Sol Chinooks
Desert Sol Maybird Snow	Pacific Skye Mascoma	Born: 8/2/2026	UT	Desert Sol Chinooks
Barkerville Sweet Maple Mae	Desert Sol Makani	Born: 8/11/2026	ME	Great Mountain Chinooks
Vanguard Celestial Ankaa	Laughing Mountain Mochi	Due: 11/1/2026	NJ	Vanguard Chinooks
Barkerville Penny from Heaven	Desert Sol Cole Illahee	Due: 2/25/2027	CO	MountainThunder Chinooks



2026 Utah Mighty 5 & Beyond Litter from Desert Sol Chinooks

Treasurer Report & Club Business

By Rachael Davis, COA Treasurer & Pam Turner, COA Secretary

Balance Sheet Chinook Owners Association Report Type: Accrual (Paid & Unpaid) ACCOUNTS Jun 30, 2026 Assets Cash and Bank Chase \$47,068.96 PayPal \$9,639.58 Total Cash and Bank \$56,708.54 Other Current Assets Total Other Current Assets \$0.00 Long-term Assets Total Long-term Assets \$0.00 Total Assets \$56,708.54 Liabilities Current Liabilities Total Current Liabilities \$0.00 Long-term Liabilities Total Long-term Liabilities \$0.00 Total Liabilities \$0.00 Equity Retained Earnings Profit for all prior years \$55,416.11 Profit between Jan 1, 2026 and Jun 30, 2026 \$1,292.43 Total Retained Earnings \$56,708.54 Total Equity \$56,708.54	Profit and Loss Chinook Owners Association Report Type: Accrual (Paid & Unpaid) ACCOUNTS Jan 01, 2026 to Feb 28, 2026 Income Calendar Sales \$559.25 Health Fund \$26.22 Membership \$4,610.57 Total Income \$5,196.04 Total Cost of Goods Sold \$0.00 Gross Profit As a percentage of Total Income \$5,196.04 100.00% Operating Expenses Computer – Hosting \$588.00 Computer – Software \$29.00 Insurance \$550.00 Refund for Canceled Membership \$97.50 Speciality \$2,604.11 Taxes – Corporate Tax \$35.00 Total Operating Expenses \$3,903.61 Net Profit \$1,292.43
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Recent Meeting Minutes:

- [2026-08-31-Board-Meeting-Minutes.pdf](#)
- [2026-08-27-Board-Meeting-Minutes.pdf](#)
- [2026-07-30-Board-Meeting-Minutes.pdf](#)
- [2026-06-25-Board-Meeting-Minutes.pdf](#)
- [2026-05-26-Board-Meeting-Minutes.pdf](#)
- [2026-04-30-Board-Meeting-Minutes.pdf](#)

Rainbow Bridge

Ooli – 10/31/2011 to 6/21/2026

Granite Hill Ooli

By Karen Bourke

Born on Halloween, passed on the summer solstice. We miss her terribly every day.

Sweet, beautiful, smart, opinionated, and sometimes quite goofy, for almost 15 years Ooli was the light of our lives and steadfast companion for so many hiking and canoeing adventures in the mountains and waterways of northern New England and New York. Ooli was impossible to ignore when greeting friends and strangers alike with her gorgeous coat, squinty smile, and joyful circle-wagging tail. She had a soft spot for puppies and small dogs, and loved to rough-sniff cats in a way that kept them coming back for more. Ooli made a lasting impression on all who met her. Born on Halloween in 2011, she crossed the rainbow bridge on the Summer Solstice of 2026. Ooli was one of a kind and her passing has left a giant hole in our little family, but we will cherish our mountains of photos and videos to help keep her memory alive.

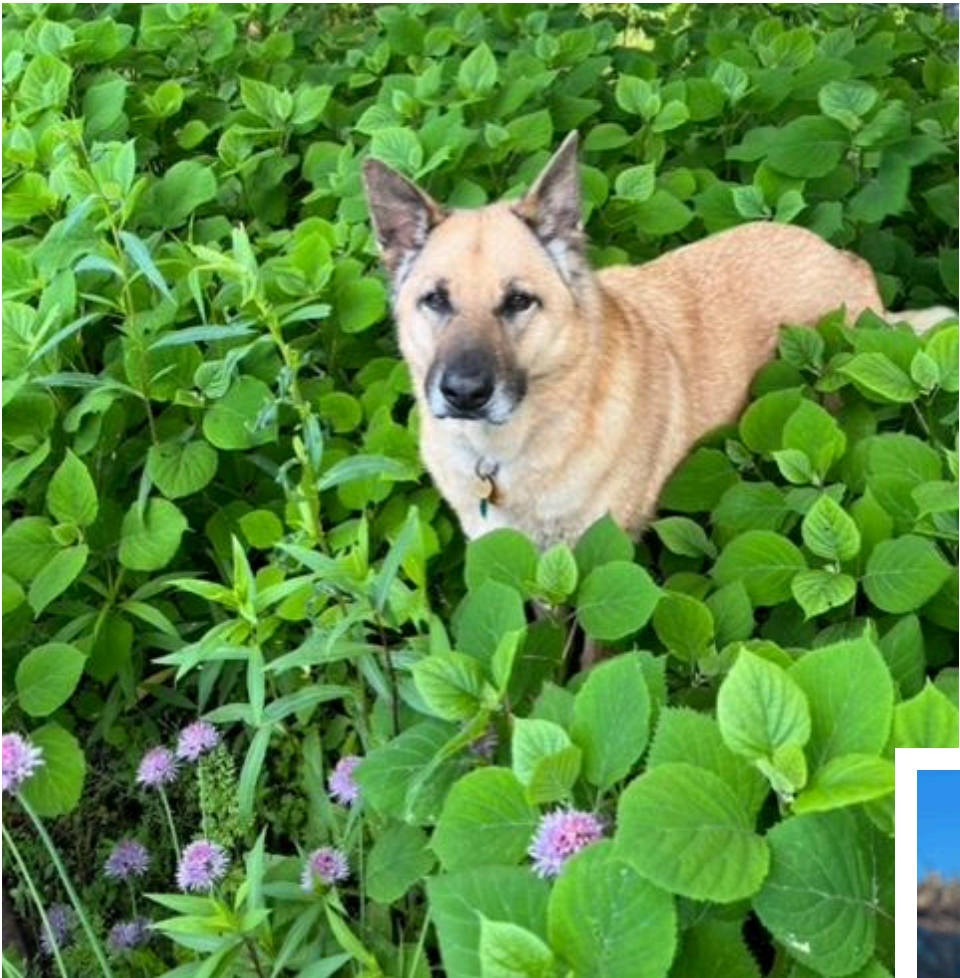


Rainbow Bridge

Rondo – 3/23/2011 to 6/12/2026
GreatMountain Rondo

By Diana Garthwaite

Simply the best boy ever, he has left a huge hole in our hearts and our lives.



Rainbow Bridge

Tawny – 5/18/2025 to 3/21/2026

Desert Sol Tawny Tolay

By Patrick Treacy

They say that when you get a dog, you are buying yourself a ticket to one of the worst days of your life. Knowing that, nothing in my life prepared me for coming downstairs on Saturday morning, May 10, 2025, and finding our old boy, Dougal, dead on the couch, having passed away in his sleep. Dougal was Liz's (my wife) and my first family dog and our first Chinook; we shared many "firsts" with him. He had just turned eleven, and while he was slowing down, nothing in his day-to-day life suggested anything was imminent. If I had to choose a way to go, dying peacefully in your sleep isn't the worst way, and I am grateful he didn't suffer. Still, Liz and I were absolutely devastated by the sudden loss of our old friend and companion.



Our other Chinook, Linden, had known life only with Dougal. Since she was eight weeks old, I don't think they had spent a single day apart, save for a few hours for separate vet visits. When she realized Dougal was gone, she stopped eating for several days and then would only take food directly from my hand. She had no interest in her daily walks – can you imagine a dog not wanting to go for a walk? I often poke fun at Liz for anthropomorphizing a dog's actions, but nobody can tell me Linden wasn't suffering from deep grief, or whatever the canine equivalent might be. She became so lethargic that I worried that there was something physically wrong with her, so I took her to the vet, just in case she had coincidentally developed an illness at the same time. Her lab tests came back clear, and our vet confirmed that Linden was experiencing the exact same deep sense of loss as us.

It became clear early on that we needed to get another dog and get back on that horse. Since finding a Chinook can take time, we decided to start the process as soon as possible. As luck would have it, Desert Sol Avalanche had a successful breeding with Rain Mountain Pippin and welcomed a litter on May 18, 2025. We applied and were gratefully approved to receive one of the pups. On July 12, 2025, I picked up Juniper – soon to be Desert Sol Tawny Tolay – from Chelsi Edinger and Matt Bolender on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State.

Since retiring in 2020, I like to spend at least 12 weeks of the year fishing, hiking, and backpacking in the mountains of the Northwest. I had a fall 2025 road trip planned with an old college hiking buddy to the Bitterroot-Selway Wilderness in southwestern Montana, giving me 10 weeks to get Tawny prepared for long hours in the car and rigorous hikes. Fortunately, we have plenty of horse trails and quiet country roads around our house on Sonoma Mountain in northern California. I slowly built

Tawny up to three-hour hikes, ensuring she had plenty of miles under her paws by the time we set off on September 15. By then, Tawny paired well with Linden on leash, stayed close by, and possessed a solid off-leash recall.



The first stop on our road trip was Lamoille Canyon in the Ruby Mountains Wilderness just outside Elko, Nevada. We did a short, one-night backpack up to Liberty Pass, and any worries I had about her taking off at the first sight of a deer quickly vanished: off leash, she stayed close by and never wandered while in camp. We followed that with hikes and backpacking trips in the Jarbidge Wilderness along the Nevada-Idaho border, Bruneau Dunes State Park in southwest Idaho, and out to Kirkwood Ranch on the Snake River in Hells Canyon, Idaho.

The highlight of our trip was a 101-mile 4-wheel-drive along the Magruder Corridor between Elk City, Idaho, and Darby, Montana. We took our time, enjoying hikes to multiple fire lookouts along the way. During one of those hikes, Tawny's nose picked up something that had been dead for a very long time, it never ceases to amaze me why a well-fed puppy will choose to eat and roll in the foulest, smelliest thing on the trail – something a hungry wild animal obviously has passed up on! That putrid roll in the grass earned her a swim in the river, prior to being allowed back into the tent. One of our best days was when we managed to bag a challenging 10,000 ft mountain peak. At 5 months and 14 days old, I'm going to go out on a limb and say Tawny was probably the youngest dog to have climbed Trapper Peak (10,157 feet above sea level). We finished the journey with a glorious 6-day backpack down the Selway River in the Bitterroot-Selway Wilderness. On that leg of the trip, I was reminded once again that I need to get packs for my dogs – food for two dogs for six days is not a light load!

After returning home, Tawny settled into a more laid back lifestyle. She completed basic obedience classes and excelled in her nose work class. We also enjoyed frequent trips to Dillon Beach on the Marin coastline alongside our regular hikes on Sonoma Mountain.

Then, our lives were turned upside down on the afternoon of Saturday, March 21, 2026. Tawny was sniffing around the yard about 100 feet away from me when she suddenly ran toward me in extreme distress. I immediately suspected a rattlesnake bite, and within minutes, we had her in the car and were rushing to the emergency vet. Liz drove while I sat in the back with Tawny. Within minutes, I could tell she was slipping away. All I could do was hold her, comfort her, and tell her how much we loved her. Halfway to the clinic, Tawny passed over the Rainbow Bridge – less than 40 minutes after the initial bite. Our vet later confirmed that a rattlesnake bite was the probable cause of her sudden death.

We will forever be grateful for the short time we shared with her; she left deep paw prints on our hearts. In her brief ten months with us, Tawny visited six states, went on a six-week road trip, summited a 10,000-foot peak, and hiked hundreds of miles of trails. She attended puppy class, graduated from Basic Obedience, and excelled at her Scenting/Nosework class. She was even featured in the Chinook Owners Association calendar for the month of April.

She loved her daily ration of scrambled eggs above all else. There was no food she would turn down, yet she never quarreled with her Chinook sister Linden over food. Tawny never stole food off the counter or kitchen table – amazingly, we didn't even have to teach her that; she must have picked up on it from Linden or us, that that was a no no. Instead, she would run her nose along the counter edge and sit silently staring at whatever smelled good. She loved "battling" plastic milk jugs, cardboard boxes, and our footwear (especially my Wellington boots). She would work a beef marrow bone for hours, then patiently wait for Linden to finish hers, knowing she could still wring hours of chewing pleasure out of the leftover bone. She adored tummy rubs, enjoyed playing fetch (if only for a few minutes), and loved eating ice cubes.

I have had many dogs in my life, but Tawny was the first who would eat her dinner lying down. She would straddle her food bowl with her front paws and eat away without having to bend her neck down... which makes total sense. I wonder why none of my other dogs ever figured that out! Prior to Tawny's arrival, we had the equivalent of sixteen dog-years of experience on our property and thought we had secured every possible escape route. We hadn't. Tawny constantly embarrassed me after I repeatedly assured Liz that the outer perimeter fence was secure, earning her the nickname the "Great Houdini." To be fair, she wasn't trying to escape to wander the neighborhood – she just wanted to be with us. She only ever tried to break out if I was working on the property outside her fenced area and she wanted to be part of the action.

Similarly, for years when driving to Montana on road trips, the setup in the back of my 4Runner was fixed: humans up front, gear in the middle, and Chinooks in the rear. Tawny was the first Chinook who repeatedly worked her way from the cargo area up into the front seats, again, just to be near us. My friend Aidan's most important daily task was building "The Wall" out of our gear to block her from the driver's area, Tawny also embarrassed him on numerous occasions. We always knew her arrival in the front seat was imminent when her wagging tail started thumping against the storage bins as she burrowed her way forward.

Liz and I were left completely devastated by how quickly everything unfolded. One minute we had a vibrant 62-pound puppy playing in the front yard, and 45 minutes later she was lying lifeless in my arms. I will carry the horror of those final 40 minutes for the rest of my life. To have a dog so young and full of life taken from us so fast is heartbreaking. We were looking forward to many years of her infectious enthusiasm, and now our house feels painfully quiet without her. I still think of and miss our old Chinook Dougal every day and now we will also grieve for our little Tawny and a life of such promise taken away all too soon.

At 61 years old, I have lived long enough to have buried very meaningful people in my life – my mother, father, aunts, uncles, cousins, and best friends. When I think of them, I can recall happy memories and funny moments with a smile. When I think of my two dogs departed I now feel just a deep sadness. For Dougal, sadness for the loss of a constant companion of the last eleven years and with Tawny, sadness for the lost opportunity of many life adventures and events. I hope that in the fullness of time, thinking of them will bring me a sense of joy for having had them in my life.



Eventually, I suppose in time, we will get back on that horse again and get ourselves another ticket, but for now, we just need time to heal.

The Communications Chair would like to thank all that contributed to this edition of the CQ.

We hope you enjoyed this issue of the CQ which always has articles and pictures from you, the membership. We are always looking for articles, stories, poems, pictures, etc. from COA members (that's you!).

Ask questions about how you can help the club and this publication by emailing us at communications@chinook.org